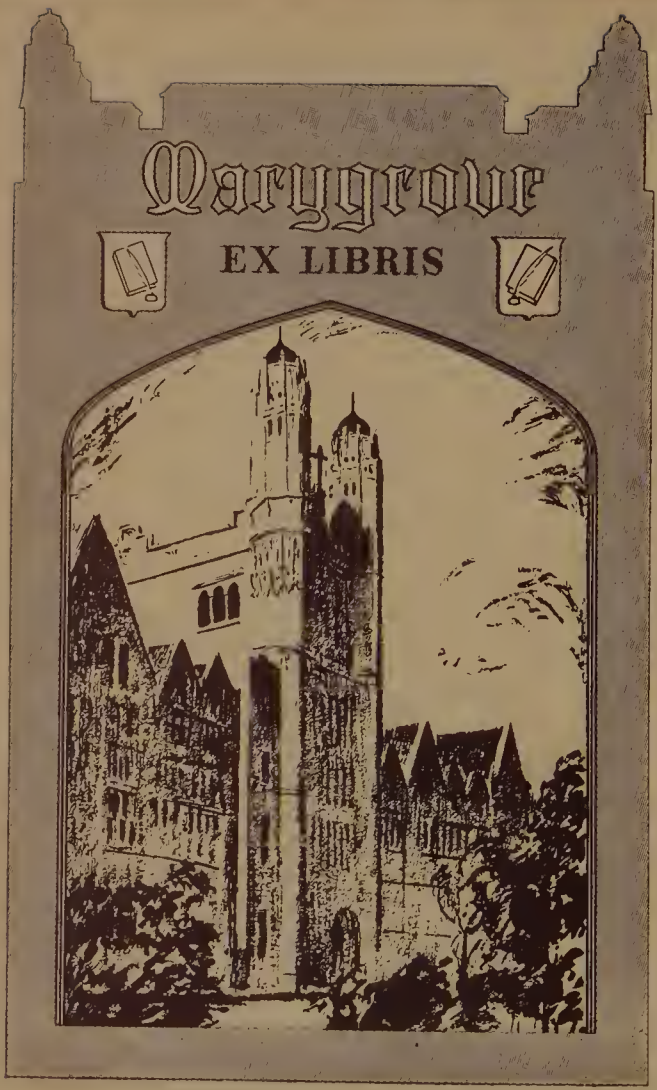
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UPSTREAM

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By MARTIN J. SCOTT, S.J.

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To the Memory of
ANTHONY KIERNAN PARKER
whose highly spiritual
and artistic nature
inspired this work
this volume
is lovingly dedicated
by the author

UPSTREAM

I

"SHINE, Mister? Shine?"

"Shine? Shine? Nickel a shine!"

The appeal came from a lad of twelve. He was at the Union Square entrance to the subway. It was four in the afternoon. Passers-by were hurrying to catch a train, but occasionally one turned to give a glance at the unusual little boy who in a timid voice was trying to get a customer. One look at the lad was sufficient to inform even a casual observer that this was no ordinary bootblack. Although he was poorly dressed, he was nevertheless neat, and, strange to say, his own shoes were shined. There were a number of bootblacks in the vicinity of the subway station, all of whom needed shines themselves. Not so this little man whose musical voice kept singing:

"Shine! Shine, Mister? Shine?"

It was clear he did not belong there.

Small of body, delicate of frame, the only big thing about him was his eyes. Eyes that were large and deep and full of soul. Jet-black wavy hair crowned a head that painter or sculptor would rave over. He seemed like a picture cut from the canvas of a master. In fact, he looked so very much unlike a boot-black that people passed him by, thinking that he was in the thing for a lark.

But it was no lark for Tony Bosco. At home — if a single room in a rear tenement could be called *home* — was a widowed mother, who barely managed to keep body and soul together by her needlework. As a girl Tony's mother had attended a convent school in Italy, where she had learned the art of embroidering; and it was by her skill with the needle that she now maintained, after a fashion, her little home of one room in the rear of a broken-down tenement. Tony, after school-hours and on Saturdays, went to the various stores for which his mother worked in order to get the material for her handicraft, or to deliver the finished product.

On this morning, which was Ash Wednesday, Tony had risen at five-thirty and as soon as dressed hurried over to the church where as

usual he served at the altar for the six o'clock mass. It happened that a priest who was a stranger to him said the mass, and blessed and distributed the ashes after mass.

In the sacristy afterwards, the priest asked his name.

"Anthony Bosco," the lad replied, "but they all call me Tony, except mother."

"Well, Anthony, you're a bright boy and you serve mass well. My name is Father Boone. I am giving a mission near-by and I'd like to have you serve my mass the next few mornings."

"I'll be glad to, Father Boone; and, Father, will you say a little prayer for my mother?"

He then briefly told the priest about his home.

"I'll say not only a little prayer but a big one, my lad."

On arriving home at a little before seven, his mother, observing an unusual gladness in him, said:

"You are very joyful for Ash Wednesday, Anthony."

"But mother, I met such a kind priest, who talked to me as though he knew me all my life. And mother, he's going to pray for both of us."

"That's very nice, Anthony, dear. What's his name?"

"He told me, mother, but I was so taken up with what he said that I forgot his name; but I am going to serve his mass tomorrow, then I'll know it for keeps."

"Son, can't you think of another way of saying it; you know mother wants her boy to be a little gentleman always?"

"That's the way all the boys say it, mother; — 'for keeps.'"

"But you're not as all the boys, Anthony. Always remember that your dear father was of a distinguished Roman family, and his son must try to be like him."

"Thank you, mother; I shall do my best."

Mrs. Bosco made no reference to her own family, but Tony knew from various sources that his mother was a woman of quality. She was the daughter of an English gentleman of letters, and had met her future husband while in Naples with her father, who came to Italy to consult the Vatican Library for original data on a work he had in view. When Tony was five years old his father and mother came to New York, where Mr. Bosco was promised a lucra-

tive position in one of the leading art stores. He was known as an expert in judging works of art and evaluating them.

For six years things went favorably with Mr. Bosco. His salary enabled him to live comfortably and to educate his son becomingly. Then suddenly all was changed. Returning home one evening, Mr. Bosco was struck by an automobile while crossing Amsterdam Avenue and Eighty-sixth Street. He was hurried to the hospital, where it was found that he had sustained a fractured skull. Two days later Tony was without a father.

Tony was then eleven years old. For a year Mrs. Bosco managed to get along by moving to cheaper quarters, and from time to time selling some of the art objects with which her husband had decorated the home. But living in New York consumes money fast. One thing after another was sold as the widow and her child descended lower and lower in the scale of living, until finally they landed in a single room of a rear tenement on Second Avenue. But the mother was brave. Shé never gave in. Often there was food for only one. And Tony was not the one that had to do without.

" Mother," said Tony one day when he came

home from school, " mother, I never see you eating; when *do* you eat, mother? "

Her answer was to fold him in her arms and drop an unseen tear on his head. Then quickly mastering herself she beamed a motherly smile on him saying:

" You are mother's food and mother's life, Anthony."

But from that day forth Tony never ate all that was put before him, even though the all was very little, and his poor little " tummy " had plenty of room for more.

It was shortly after this that Tony, unknown to his mother, got a bootblack outfit, and after school-hours stationed himself at the subway entrance at Union Square to pick up a few nickels polishing the shoes of passers-by. In three days he had made seventy cents. But he was in a quandary. He wanted to help his mother, but did not dare tell her he was a bootblack. He knew he would have to tell her if he brought food or money home.

The death of her husband was almost death to Tony's mother. He never saw her cry. But the angels did. And Tony's mother never saw him cry. But his sobs often filled a dark hallway.

One day Tony asked:

"Mumsy, why did God take papa from us?"

"I don't know, dear; but God knows, and that is enough."

"Didn't God know how much we loved papa, Mumsy?"

"Yes, darling; but God loved Jesus, and He let Jesus die for us, and papa is now with Jesus. We must all go when God calls us. He calls some of us before others. The great thing is to be ready when He calls us. Papa was always ready, and that's why he is now with God."

"But why are we so sorry, if papa is so happy?"

"We're sorry for ourselves, son; we miss papa — it's the separation. Oh, it's hard, very hard. But we must not be sorry for papa, he would not come back for the whole world."

For a moment there was silence. Then the mother spoke again.

"It's hard at times to say 'Thy will be done'; but when we think that God is *our Father,* and that He gave us the love we have for one another, we must trust Him, as you must trust me, Anthony."

God was a reality with Tony. The other world was to him not something far off and

vague, but close at hand. The supernatural influenced him in all that he did. He felt that if he were friends with God the rest did not matter so much. But at times it cost him dearly to be friends with God. He knew that he could not do wrong and be friends with God. Frequently he could have avoided trouble or have gained some advantage by doing what was not right, but he always held to the right.

It was hard for Tony now to tell his mother how he had earned the seventy cents which he was about to give her. She might tell him not to bootblack any more. That would mean hunger for her, for the little money she earned barely made ends meet, and he did want so much to help her. However, he made up his mind that he would tell her everything. She had often said that honest work was honorable, and had pointed to Jesus working as a carpenter's helper.

Instead of bringing home the seventy cents — (Tony reasoned that if his mother had the money she would use it sparingly and perhaps expend it mainly on him) — he went to the grocery and invested his seventy cents on some edibles. Seventy cents seems a lot when to get it you have worked three days shining shoes at

a nickel a pair. Tony looked around to see what he could get for his seventy cents. Everything seemed so small in size and big in price. He went from one store to another. His object was to get as much as possible for his money. It seemed to him that the object of every storekeeper was to give as little as possible for his seventy cents.

In the end he bought two loaves of bread at eight cents a loaf; that was sixteen cents. He remembered that his mother liked tea but that there had been none in the home for some time.

"Ten cents' worth of tea, please," he said to the man who was waiting on him.

"We don't sell it that way. One pound; or half-pound."

"How much is a half-pound?"

"We've got some for thirty cents."

Tony quickly added sixteen to thirty; and when he found it would leave him only twenty-four cents, he hesitated at the half-pound. But he quickly decided that he must get tea, no matter what else had to be left out. A little butter and a bottle of milk absorbed the balance of his fortune; and, with the package under his arm, he walked home happier than

any millionare who ever purchased a string of pearls for his fiancée, or a yacht for himself.

He almost ran up the three flights of stairs that led to his mother's mansion. Her quick ear heard his rapid steps and her heart leapt with joy for she knew that with a boy speed always means joy. She opened the door to welcome him with a hug, when to her astonished eyes she saw his arms encircled around his purchases.

As Tony entered the room he stood stock-still, a smile lighting up his face and a glint shining out of his eyes. Before his mother could say a word he began:

"It's not Christmas, Mumsy, but Santa Claus has been around."

Depositing his precious burden on a wooden chair, he opened his arms to his mother's loving approach, as she said:

"Tell me about it, Anthony."

"I'll tell you the whole book, Mumsy; but first let's celebrate your son's first *fi — nan — shall* stroke!"

"'The book' first, Anthony; the rest can wait. How did you get that load of provisions?"

"I earned it, mother dear."

"Earned it!" she rejoined. "You earned it? You're only a child, Anthony. You're barely twelve, and that load must have cost — well, a good deal."

"Seventy cents, Mumsy."

"All that for seventy cents!"

"It's knowing how to buy, Mumsy!"

This to poor "Mumsy" who was able to stretch a dime almost to a dollar.

"Where did the money come from, dear?"

"Let's make the tea first and I'll tell you all about it while you're drinking your tea."

"Tea!"

"Yes: tea!"

"Why, tea costs a lot. Now, Anthony, before we go any further, sit down and tell me just what you've done."

Mrs. Bosco would rather go hungry than have a houseful of provisions, if there was any question regarding their rightful possession. Not that she thought that her boy would knowingly be a party to anything dishonest, but in her solicitude she wished to be the judge herself as to the correctness of what he had done.

With much hesitation, Tony told how one of the boys who went to school with him earned

almost a dollar every day after school by shoe shining. A few days ago the boy was absent from school. Tony, on going to see what kept his friend from school, found him confined to his room with a swollen jaw from an ulcerated tooth.

"O Mumsy, his face was as big as a balloon! He tried to smile when he saw me, but he was an awful sight. It hurt him so much to smile that he began to cry."

"But come to the point, dear; how did you get the money?"

"Well, Mumsy, I — I — I just thought of you, and how hard you work all day sewing, and how little you get for it, and I — I said to myself, why can't I help — and I — I asked him if he'd let me take his outfit until he got well — "

"Let you take what?"

"His — his boot — boot-black box."

"You mean you went boot-blacking!"

"O mother dear, don't take on so! I did it for you, Mumsy dear. Don't cry, mother. Don't cry."

For a few minutes his mother could not master her emotions. Then with eyes wet with tears she folded her darling boy in her arms.

"It was good of you, Anthony," she said, after a moment, "but it was not what mother wants her boy to do."

The next day Tony returned the boot-black establishment to its owner.

However, he was not at rest concerning his mother. He did not see why he should not contribute his mite to the maintenance of the home. He worried so much over the matter that his mother finally gave him permission to run errands, after school and on Saturdays, for a market near-by.

Meanwhile at school, Tony was easily the leader of his class. His memory was remarkable. It was easy for him after reading a page to repeat it almost word for word. But more remarkable than his memory was his penetrating mind. He asked questions of the teacher which often obliged her to fence cleverly in order to uphold her prestige. For instance, one day she was explaining that the higher the mountain the colder it was on top. Tony asked: "How can it be colder since it's nearer the sun?" Of all the class he was the only one who seemed to notice an apparent contradiction.

He was always asking questions but never

inconsiderately. He was the soul of sympathy and consideration. If he perceived that a question was causing embarrassment, he very adroitly changed the subject or appeared to be unconcerned about the answer.

Tony's great ambition in life was to be a musician. For this his temperament admirably qualified him. His father was a violinist, and such a good one, that at one time he contemplated changing his profession and taking up the violin. The violin of his father was one of the last things Tony's mother held on to. One by one she had stripped her home of nearly all his belongings, but the violin she would not part with, even though she was in distress, and the instrument would bring a good price.

She was saving that violin for Tony. Tony himself looked upon the instrument with the affection of a mother for a child. He had his own little violin, upon which he practised every spare moment. Up to the time he got the job of running errands at the market he gave most of his time out of school to the violin. And even after his job he continued to practise at every available moment. An old Austrian violinist in the neighborhood, who took a great

fancy to Tony, gave him lessons from time to time.

Tony spoke Italian as well as he did English, and his English was almost perfect, under the careful supervision of his cultured mother.

Among his playmates Tony was known as "Little Lord Fauntleroy." The children had seen this character in the movies a short while after Tony had moved into the district, and thereafter, referred to him as "The Little Velvet Lord." Mrs. Bosco kept her boy as neat as a prince, no matter what she had to do without herself. And the peculiar thing about it was that he did not excite envy. He was so companionable, notwithstanding his fine ways, that no one could help liking him. It was not surprising therefore, that, when a certain distinguished visitor called at the school, Tony was selected to make a little address of welcome. He did it so well and so easily that when it came to the little performance which was to grace the closing exercises of the term, he was designated for the leading part in the playlet.

Tony's greatest delights were music and books. He practised on the violin hours every day, and made such progress that the old Aus-

trian told him that he could teach him nothing more.

What was Tony to do? He wanted to become a violinst, a distinguished violinist, but could not afford to pay for lessons. However, he kept on practising, and his mother observed that day by day he was producing a tone which was more and more like the human voice. Although he could not play very advanced music, which called for special technical skill, what he did play seemed to vibrate with feeling and to reach one's very heart.

One day it occurred to Tony that he might pick up a few pennies playing his violin in odd places, if his mother would permit him to do so. Accordingly he broached his plan to her.

"Mother dear, you're not looking any too well."

"Mother's well enough, dearie."

"But you've had no tea the last two weeks, and you like tea."

"Well, we like lots of things we must do without."

"But must you do without? I can do something to help, if Mumsy will let me."

As his mother did not reply, he waited a moment and continued:

"Mother, today I played on daddy's violin. I'm big enough to use it now. And mother dear, it almost seemed to talk as I drew the bow over the strings. Won't you let me help you by playing for what I can get here and there?"

While he was speaking his mother was in a reverie. At mention of her husband's violin her mind flew back to the days in Rome when he cast a spell over his friends by the almost human tones which he evoked from his instrument. When Tony had finished his remarks, his silence broke the spell of memory and she returned to reality, looking abstractedly at her boy's questioning face.

"Oh, pardon me, Anthony; you were saying that you were big enough to play father's violin!"

"I said more than that, mother. Won't you let me help you? I'm sure daddy would want me to. I'll play the violin in nice places only, and be very careful."

Mrs. Bosco drew her boy close to her, kissed his forehead, fondled his beautiful head, and kissing him again, said:

"God bless you, Anthony; perhaps you better, but be very, very careful."

If Tony had received promise of a trip

around the world he could not have felt happier than he was made by his mother's answer. His reaction to the gratification of his desire was to throw his arms around her and hug her until she fairly begged for release.

II

TONY, although he was now but twelve years old, was strong with that nervous strength which characterizes the artist. He gave up his job at the market, in order to have more time to fit himself for his great venture of supporting the home with his father's violin. For two weeks he practised three or four hours a day. He knew his limitations and decided to keep to simple melodies feelingly played. He learned how to play *Home, Sweet Home* with easy variations and with double notes. He also specialized on *The Long, Long Trail,* improvising a singing part with it which gave it the effect of a duet. But his favorite was an old, old song called *The Orphan Child.* The melody of this song was full of pathos, and the words, which he sang as alto to the melody, were so tender that at times the tears would stream down his cheeks as he sang, or rather sobbed and played.

It was about nine-thirty A.M., one school holiday some two weeks after his mother's con-

sent had been given, that Tony sallied forth on his first venture as a musician. Such an early hour was not any too favorable for a début. Most people at that time of day were out on business only, and had little or no time for listening to a child fiddling.

Everybody seemed to be rushing somewhere. Tony thought that he had never seen people in such a hurry. He carried his violin in a case tucked under his arm, and, as he went from street to street looking for a handful of people at rest, he suddenly found himself in City Hall Park. Even there the benches were either empty or occupied by people who seemed to be more in need of help than able to give it.

The Woolworth Building caught his eye and he drifted towards it. As he passed and came to Barclay street he saw a church on the corner west of Broadway. He had never before been in this neighborhood and did not know what church it was. However, it diverted his attention from the Woolworth, and presently he was standing before it.

While deliberating as to whether or not it was a Catholic church, he saw a business-like man come out and bless himself as he was crossing the vestibule. As Tony stood there,

man after man went in or came out. It was too late for mass, and Tony wondered what was going on within. Timidly he ascended the steps and entered the church. There was no service going on. Here and there were men and women kneeling in prayer.

What Tony saw is what any one may see almost any hour of the day in Old St. Peter's Church. When this church was built it was in the residental section of Manhattan. Now it is in the most congested business district of the world. Men and women on their way to or from business drop in this venerable house of God by hundreds to say a little prayer, before or after the day's work.

Tony approached the sanctuary, and observing some people praying before a shrine of our Blessed Mother, knelt with them. Earnestly he prayed to the Mother of God to bless his mother. He thought not of himself. While blessing himself at the end of his devotions he noticed a man drop a coin in a receptacle, take a candle from a box and, lighting it, place it on the candelabrum before the shrine. Tony had but five cents in his pocket. It was his lunch money in case his violin playing should fail to bring him anything. Unhesitat-

ingly he dropped his precious nickel in the receptacle, and lighting a candle placed it in a socket of the candelabrum, saying as he did so:

"Blessed Mother, may this flame speak to thee of my love."

As he was about to turn away, he added:

"And Blessed Mother, do thou aid me to help my mother!"

He left the church lighthearted and strolled towards Broadway. Like many New York boys he had never seen the Woolworth Building at close range. What people come to see from distant parts the boys of Manhattan seldom or never go to see. There are literally hundreds of thousands of boys and girls in the city who have not seen the Brooklyn Bridge, nor the Battery, nor the Statue of Liberty. New York is a nation rather than a city. It has more people than there are in all the rest of the State. New York City alone has more people than all New England. Lower Broadway, where Tony now found himself, is, during business hours, the most crowded part of this crowded town.

Standing before the Woolworth, Tony looked up to the top of its fifty-seven stories, wishing in his heart that he could mount to its summit. As he passed the main entrance he

saw a sign which read: "Elevator to the Tower Running." Not knowing that there was a charge of fifty cents to ascend to the tower-balcony, he entered the elevator in company with a party of tourists. When they got to the last stop and all had left the car, a man in uniform approached them to collect their tickets. Tony was paralyzed with embarrassment. There must have been consternation as well as innocence in his face, for the official, instead of being gruff or rude, said:

"Have you no ticket, son?"

For answer Tony's eyes filled. His throat clutched. He could not utter a word. One of the gentleman of the party noticed the plight of the lad, and said:

"I guess you are like ourselves, we didn't know we had to pay until just before starting."

He handed the official fifty cents, and then put another half-dollar in Tony's hand. Tony wanted to decline the half-dollar, but as the man kindly insisted, he thanked him and put the money in his pocket.

Passing through the turnstile, Tony found himself on top of the world. He could see for miles in all directions. The day was beautifully clear. Looking south he beheld Sandy Hook and the vessels to and from Europe as they

were traversing the bay. To the north he could see the Palisades of the Hudson, and in the distance, Dunwoodie Seminary on the elevation east of Yonkers. The East River, far below, was carrying its fleets of vessels under Brooklyn Bridge to Long Island Sound. Looking down on crowded Broadway the people seemed like ants and the automobiles like children's toy-cars. Three States lay before him — New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

There was a revolving telescope which one could look through for a dime. But Tony had no dime to spare. One of the ladies of the group, observing Tony's wistful gaze at the telescope, said to him:

"Come, sonny, and take a peep!" at the same time dropping a dime in the slot.

Looking his gratitude as well as expressing it, Tony approached the telescope and, revolving it, to the various points of the compass, saw, as if right before him, what before was so distant.

On account of the early hour there were few observers as yet. In fact, the trip that Tony made was the first run of the day. After the party had been there some fifteen minutes they

moved towards the elevator. Ordinarily there is but a short wait for the car. Now, however, after some five minutes, the official heard the telephone bell ring and on answering found that one of the doors of the car was out of order and that there would be a delay of some fifteen minutes before the car would be at the tower. The party took the disappointment good-naturedly, and going to the lookouts made the most of the delay by viewing more leisurely what they had looked at hurriedly before.

One of the gentlemen who seemed to have enough of the view, observing how carefully Tony guarded his violin, said:

"What have you in that box, son?"

"A violin."

"So you're a fiddler, eh?"

"I play a little, sir."

At this the man said to the group:

"We have a fiddler here; what do you say to a little music?"

Before they could reply, Tony interrupted:

"Do let me play for you. I want to do something to show my thanks."

As they gathered round him he proceeded to open the case and take out the instrument. It

was neatly covered by a pad and immaculately clean. As he tenderly took it in his hands one of the ladies whispered:

"He handles it as if it were a baby."

Another said:

"What a face he has! Refinement in every line — a study for a Raphael."

Tony placed the violin to his shoulder, touched the strings lightly to see if they were in tune, and then began to play. He was transfigured! His countenance was aglow; his eyes were half closed; he seemed to be entranced. It was as still as midnight. The background for the début was perfect. He opened with *Home, Sweet Home*. Without knowing it, he had touched a chord in the hearts of these people far from home. He seemed to put his very soul into the instrument. The good kind people for whom he was playing inspired him. The thought of his beloved mother sitting lonely at home inspired him. The answer to the prayer he had made to the Blesssed Mother inspired him. The words of the song inspired him. The group was astonished at the transformation before them. They were expecting a tune, not a soul-gripping melody.

Tony first played the air through in simple

but vibrating tones. The notes seemed to evoke from the listeners some of the emotion which animated the player. Next he played the simple melody on double strings, giving it the effect of a duet. This was followed by a variation on the theme, in which his fingers ran up and down the strings, the bow here and there accenting the dominant note of the melody and making the song, as it were, to hang in the air. Finally he came back to the simple melody, but this time he sang the words of the song, playing an alto to his soprano, giving to it the effect of voice and violin obbligato. He had a mellow quality in his singing tones which blended exquisitely with the soft notes of his instrument. Here and there as he played he improvised a little trill, or turn, which set off the words and melody of the song:

"'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.

"Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home!
Oh, there's no place like home!

"An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gayly, that come at my call, —
Give me them, and the peace of mind dearer than all.

"Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home!
Oh, there's no place like home!

"To thee I'll return, overburdened with care,
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.

"Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home!
Oh, there's no place like home!"

He finished. For a moment there was not a sound. All stood motionless, their gaze riveted on the little boy whose soul had communed with theirs. The first to break the spell was a gray-haired lady, who bent down and kissed Tony on the forehead. The man who gave Tony the fifty cents walked away from the group to hide the emotion which had mastered him. Not so two of the ladies who were not ashamed to take out their handkerchiefs to dry their eyes.

There is no instrument like the violin to which a performer can impart his emotions. It seems that players of a certain type can put their very soul into the vibrating strings. Tony was of that delicate, artistic temperament which enables a performer to awaken in his audience the feelings which animate his own breast.

While the party was yet under the spell of Tony's art, the voice of the official was heard, informing them that the elevator was at the floor. Tony tactfully held back until all were in the car, when he too entered.

When they had descended the half-hundred stories and had arrived at the street floor, the

man who had previously spoken to Tony, said to him:

"What is your name, my boy?"

"Anthony Bosco."

"Anthony Bosco?"

"Yes; but everyone except my mother calls me 'Tony.'"

"Well, I'm going to call you 'Anthony,' as your mother does. Do you know, Anthony, that you have exceptional talent for the violin?"

"My teacher told me he could teach me nothing more, sir."

"Have you stopped taking lessons?"

"Yes sir. He taught me for nothing, because he liked me. I can't pay for lessons, so I just practise all I can."

"Would you like to take lessons?"

For answer the gentleman saw such an inspired look in the upturned face that it made him think of a seraph.

"Where do you live, Anthony?"

"On Second Avenue; near the Italian church."

Tony thought that, like himself, everybody knew where the Italian church was.

"Is your mother at home during the day?"

"She's always at home — day and night."

"And you, Anthony; do you play the violin in the streets for what you can pick up?"

"This is my first day, sir. I started out this morning. Everybody was in such a rush that I didn't get a chance to play yet, except for you — away up there in the tower."

"That was your first performance?"

"My first."

"Anthony, I hope it will be your last of that kind. You run home now and tell your mother somebody will be around to see her before noon. Put this in your pocket. No; don't refuse it. It's for your mother. What did you say was the number? — Thank you."

Tony's heart was jumping with joy. He was so elated that he forgot to look at the money the kind man had given him. His first thought was to run to the church and thank Our Blessed Lady for his good fortune. As he neared the church he idly put his hand in his pocket and felt the crumpled bill he had hurriedly put there. He drew it out and looked at it. To his amazement it was a ten-dollar bill.

"Oh," he ejaculated, "how good God has been to us!"

Entering the church he went directly to the sanctuary rail, and genuflecting before the tabernacle of the altar knelt in prayer before his Sacramental Lord. After an act of love and thanksgiving to the King of kings, he went to the shrine of the King's Mother.

"O Blessed Mother," he prayed, "I thank thee for my mother and little me! Dear Mother of Jesus, obtain the blessing of thy Divine Son on that good man. Holy Mary, Mother of God, thank Jesus for me. Blessed Mother, help me to be thy worthy child."

He arose, genuflected before the altar, and passed down the aisle to the door. While crossing the vestibule he saw the poor-box at the door. Thrusting his hand in his pocket he pulled out the half-dollar which had been given him, and depositing it in the box, said:

"For the love of Thee, dear Jesus."

Hurriedly he made his way home. When his mother heard his footsteps on the stairs she was full of foreboding. Why was her Anthony returning so soon? Was he discouraged? Had he met with rough usage? She had commended him to the care of the Blessed Virgin, and even now was telling her beads for her boy's protection.

The door burst open, and, all out of breath, Tony tried to tell in one brief sentence the glad news that was reflected in every line of his countenance. He was so excited, that, if it were not for his beaming face and jubilant manner, his mother would have been alarmed. But one look into the eyes of her boy told her that all was well — not only well, but very well.

His first articulate utterance was:

"Mumsy dear, a man's coming soon. A good, kind man, Mumsy. He gave me this." At which he handed her the ten dollars. She held back her hand. To her questioning gaze he replied by narrating all that had transpired from the time he left home.

When he finished she folded him in her arms, caressing him and repeating:

"God is good! God is good!"

Time was when pride would have made her refuse the money of a stranger. But destitution had driven out pride. Besides she regarded this gift as a donation from above — an answer to prayer.

Not knowing when the man would drop in on them, she put away her sewing, and started to set things in order. It required but a moment to do this as she never let things get much dis-

arranged. Although her home consisted of but one room, in a tenement which was dilapidated and ill-kept, her abode was always spotlessly clean, and everything in it tastefully arranged.

She herself, although her dress was of the cheapest material, was always arrayed with that propriety and simple charm which characterizes the truly refined. Her culture was reflected in her boy. Not only was his manner easy and elegant, but his clothes, no matter how threadbare, were always arranged with that nicety which distinguishes the well-bred. At school the boys sometimes teased him on his appearance, but he took their jibes with such good nature, and his manner was always so winsome that they usually ended by admiring him all the more.

Mrs. Bosco, having duly made ready for her visitor, resumed her sewing.

Tony ran the brush over his shoes; gave his hair an extra touch; arranged the best chair for the expected guest; and put on his Sunday coat. When he had made the most of their meager surroundings, he took down from the book-shelf — it consisted of three public library books — *Little Lord Fauntleroy,* and

was soon buried in the exploits of that wonderful little aristocrat.

In silence the mother sewed and prayed, while her boy followed absorbingly the career of the boy lord in the land which gave birth to his own dear mother.

III

ABOUT eleven-thirty, slow steps were heard on the stairs below. The mother's heart leapt. In his excitement Tony dropped *Little Lord Fauntleroy* on the floor.

"Anthony, you better meet the gentleman and show him up the dark stairs."

"Yes, mother," and with a bound he was at the door.

To his astonishment and dismay the steps on the stairs were those of an elderly tenant who lived on the floor above. Tony slowly closed the door, and resuming his book was again lost in the adventures of his hero.

A half-hour passed; — an hour; — two hours! No sign of the benevolent gentleman! All of a sudden Tony put his hand to his forehead and in consternation said:

"O mother! I gave him the wrong number! I gave him our last address, in my excitement."

It was only some weeks ago that they had moved into their present quarters, and Tony in his confusion had misdirected his kind

friend. Quick as thought he shot down the stairs and ran to his former flat. He made inquiries here and there, and at last found a boy of his own age who told him that an automobile had been there about two hours previously, and that a well-dressed man had gotten out and was inquiring for some one. Tony's heart sank. He was distressed — not so much on his own account, as that he had led the kind man a useless hunt.

On returning home he looked so depressed that his mother assumed a lightheartedness much at variance with her real feelings.

"Well, Anthony, your first day was successful beyond all hopes, even though you did not find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow."

"But, mother, what will the kind man think of me? And he so good as to come to us!"

"We can't help that now, dear. It's just one of those little mistakes which sometimes happen with the best of us. Be thankful, Anthony, for the good the day has brought us, and try to think no more of the disappointment."

To forget was easier said than done. Tony could not forget the matter. Why did the man want to see them in their home? Perhaps he was going to do something for mother. Or maybe

he was going to send him to a violin master. At the very thought of what he might have missed by his brief slip of memory he became so dejected that he was utterably unable to say or do anything. He just sat and moped. Finally, after a half-hour of useless fretting, he sought solace in his violin.

Tony never played so well as when he was either grateful or sad. Gratitude stirred his emotions as did sorrow; and under the spell of either his very soul seemed to find expression in his instrument.

A favorite song of his mother was *The Angel's Whisper*. Whenever she was in doubt or anxiety he could hear her sweet voice tenderly crooning this delicate song of the Irish poet, so expressive of love and hope.

It was to Tony the symbol of trust in God, no matter how dark the prospect. He took up his violin, and, after a few preliminary snatches of tunes, began the exquisite melody of Samuel Lover.

He played it through with a depth of feeling which astonished his mother. She was amazed that one so young could communicate so much of himself to bow and string. Tony seemed to be carried away by the emotion aroused by his

own playing, and, having completed the melody, began it again with improvisations of his own. His mother stopped her sewing and gazed in rapture at her boy. After he finished the melody the second time, she involuntarily began to sing the words of the song as he started to play it a third time in double notes. When he heard her voice he quickly switched the melody to accompanying chords, and to the soprano of his mother he added his own alto voice; and together they sang:

"A baby was sleeping,
Its mother was weeping,
For her husband was far on the wild raging sea:
And the tempest was swelling
Round the fisherman's dwelling,
And she cried: 'Dermot, darling, oh come back to me!'

"Her beads while she numbered,
The baby still slumbered,
And smiled in her face as she bended her knee.
'Oh, blest be that warning,
My child, thy sleep adorning,
For I know that the angels are whispering with thee.

"'And while they are keeping
Bright watch o'er thy sleeping,
Oh, pray to them softly, my baby, with me!
And say thou would'st rather
They'd watch o'er thy father —
For I know that the angels are whispering with thee.'

"The dawn of the morning
Saw Dermot returning,
And the wife wept with joy her babe's father to see;
And closely caressing
Her child, with a blessing,
Said: 'I knew that the angels were whispering with thee.'"

As they sang the last line together, Tony played the melody in a high treble, two octaves above the voices. He let the final note die out as gentle as a zephyr — in very truth like an angel's whisper.

They had hardly finished when they heard a gentle rap at the door, and to their astonishment on Tony's opening it there stood before them the gentleman of the quest. They had been so much absorbed in the music that they

had not heard the steps of the visitor ascending the stairs. As he caught the music and words from the floor below he climbed the creaking stairs as quietly as possible. He knew he was on the trail of his quest. No one but Tony could make the violin speak like that.

After his failure to find the address, he had returned to his hotel not knowing what to think. Tony was too honest a boy to deceive him. There must be a mistake. He attributed it to himself. But he recollected that Tony had said that he lived near a church. He had forgotten about this in his disappointment. But on recalling it he decided to try again. For somehow Tony haunted him. He had never seen a face quite so spiritual, nor eyes so deep that they seemed to come from another world. The soul of the boy shone in his very countenance, and bore a message from a sphere beyond this material world.

The gentleman was an artist, and a patron of artists. Having seen Tony he was as desirous of seeing him again as a painter is to look upon a masterpiece that has once clutched his soul.

But he not only wanted to see Tony, he had made up his mind that the boy was in very

deed a genius and that if his talent were cultivated he would be a world-artist. All this had occurred to him while Tony was playing and singing *Home, Sweet Home.*

He was a man not at all sentimental, but Tony had touched his soul in a way that made him turn aside to hide his emotions. He knew that none but a born artist could so affect his hearers. He had determined then and there that if his idea of the home conditions were what he fancied, he would spare neither money nor pains to advance this prodigy. Accordingly, he determined to try again to find the boy.

Going directly to the church, the first priest he met at the rectory was Father Boone who was giving a five-day mission to the young men of the parish. Tony had served Father Boone's mass this morning, and, in reply to the priest's question as to where he lived, had told him his address.

Father Boone was so much impressed by the boy that he had it in mind to see him at his home and find out if anything was being done for a lad who showed such exquisite promise as Tony. Father Boone had charge of a boys' choir in St. Leonard's Church and whenever

he met with a lad who gave evidence of artistry, he interested himself in him, and, if feasible, had him share the benefits of his organization.

Tony had impressed him as being such a boy, and during the day he was going to look him up. The priest had some good friends who were always glad to lend a helping hand at his request, and he intended to interest one of them in the lad, if his surmises concerning him turned out right.

The gentleman briefly stated to Father Boone the purpose of his inquiry and narrated the incident in the Woolworth Tower.

"My dear sir," said Father Boone, "you have anticipated me. I have had the same impression of the boy as yourself."

Father Boone then told the gentleman of Tony's serving his mass this very morning, and of the deep impression the boy had made on him by the spirituality which seemed to emanate from him.

The man, having obtained Tony's address, parted from the priest with mutual regards. In a few minutes he was at the tenement where Tony lived.

Tony's apartment, or rather room, was three

flights up and to the rear. As the stranger was starting up the third flight he heard the strains of the violin and the mellow voices of mother and son. Softly he ascended, and as the third verse began he stood entranced by the artistic rendering of voice and instrument. The fourth, and last, verse brought him back to recollections of his own early life and of a devoted mother, and with difficulty he held back a tear.

As it was his eyes were dim as the last sound of the song hung in the air. He hesitated to rap, as he was loath to interrupt the tender, silent communing of mother and son, which he knew must have followed from the song. After a short interval he rapped gently, and in response the door was immediately opened by Tony, who stood in surprise and joy before him.

For a moment Tony could say or do nothing, so complete was his astonishment and happiness. But quickly recovering his poise he went out into the hallway to greet his kind friend and escort him in. As they were about to cross the threshold, Tony politely stepped aside to let the gentleman precede him. As he did this he made a gracious inclination of his body and a directive gesture with his hand

towards the open room. Without saying anything the visitor took note of this and other little marks of good breeding in Tony.

One glance at the mother, however, gave him the solution of Tony's politeness. The stranger saw before him a woman of thirty-five, with delicate and refined features, simply but faultlessly attired. She arose as he entered the room and returned his restrained salutation. He perceived at once that he was in the presence of a person of quality, regardless of the environment.

He was the first to speak:

"I trust you will pardon what may seem an intrusion. . . ."

She interrupted:

"No intrusion at all. Anthony has told me of your kindness, and I am glad to meet the gentleman who took such interest in my son."

Graciously bowing, he handed her a card on which she read the name of her visitor:

"Mr. James Edward White"

Looking up from the card, she said:

"Won't you please be seated, Mr. White."

Tony placed the chair convenient to that of his mother and all sat down.

There was a moment of embarrassment. Mr. White evidently had something to say but did not exactly know how to go about it. If he were dealing with ordinary people, in run-down circumstances, he would have had no difficulty in making the proposal he had in mind. But once he had crossed the threshold from the shabby stairway, he realized that he was in the presence of people of honorable and cultured traditions.

Mrs. Bosco perceiving his embarrassment, relieved the tense situation by saying:

"Mr. White, I think I shall never be able to repay you for your interest in my boy."

"Madam, I am already paid for anything I have done, or shall do, for your son. Let me say to you that I have not had such gratification in years as was mine when I was able to do a kindness to your boy this morning. The gratitude which his eyes proclaimed assured me that I had done a service to a deserving lad. Furthermore, I do not know whether you realize it or not — your son is a genius. I use the word advisedly. And it is because I am convinced of his possibilities that I am here now."

Mrs. Bosco and Tony were thrilled by the words and manner of their visitor.

For a brief space the mother did not know what to say to the gracious advance of the gentleman.

He continued:

"I am on my way to Europe, with my two sisters and their families. This is their first visit East, but not mine. They concur in my opinion of your son, and it is with their warm accord that I make the proposal which is the object of my visit."

He then proceeded to say that with her approval he would send Tony to a private school of her own selection, and, that besides, he would put him under a violin instructor of repute.

The proposal was so extraordinary that it made Mrs. Bosco speechless for a time. She dearly loved her Anthony, and was most desirous of educating him both academically and artistically, but she was also a woman of family pride. She might have obtained help from her own people had she appealed to them, but, as she had married against their judgment, her pride would not permit her to act the dependent.

These thoughts were running through her mind while Mr. White was outlining his plans

for Tony's welfare. There was a struggle in her heart between pride of family and love of her boy.

Mr. White perceiving her hesitancy, and respecting her the more because of it, suggested that she think over the proposition, and said that he would return the next day for her decision.

Then turning to Tony, he said:

"Won't you play me something on your violin?"

"With pleasure. But you know, sir, I play only simple melodies. I hope soon to be able to play real pieces, but so far I've only been able to do easy tunes."

"I'd rather hear you play what you call 'easy tunes' than hear the most brilliant selections from some other performers. You put your soul into your playing, more so than I've ever known anyone to do."

"I am so glad to hear you say that, Mr. White," said Tony's mother, "for although it was my own opinion of Anthony's playing, I distrusted my judgment, fearing I was overfavorable to my own boy."

Meanwhile Tony had taken out and tuned his instrument and was ready to begin as soon as his guest was prepared to hear him.

Mr. White now looked expectantly towards Tony, who said:

"What kind of music do you like?"

To which his benefactor said:

"What kind do you like?"

"Oh, sometimes I like sad music — I don't know why. Again, I like prayerful tunes. Just now I feel so grateful that if you don't mind I'll play a sacred piece."

With that he raised his violin to his chin and softly and sweetly began the strains of *Silent Night*. As the bow glided over the strings, the pure, sweet tones that floated in the air were indeed like angel voices.

"Silent night, sacred night,
Bethlehem sleeps, yet what light
Floats around the holy place.
Songs of angels fill the air:
Strains of heavenly peace;
Strains of heavenly peace!

"Silent night, sacred night,
Shepherds first see the light,
Hear the alleluias ring
Which the angel chorus sing:
Christ, the Saviour, has come;
Christ, the Saviour, has come!"

Tony played the first verse with full tone and deep feeling. Before beginning the second verse he deftly adjusted a mute on his instrument, which not only diminished the volume of sound but under his artistic bowing caused the notes to come, as it were, from afar.

Tony's heart was full to overflowing, and he made his violin the vehicle of his emotions. His mother thought that she had never heard him play with such exquisite delicacy and restraint.

Mr. White was amazed at the power which this boy of twelve wielded over the instrument in his hands. Hundreds of times he had heard superior technical playing, but never had playing so touched his heart as that of Tony. The boy seemed to be able to impart his very self to the instrument. His violin all but spoke, or rather, sang.

Having finished, he laid the instrument in its case with the tenderness of a mother cradling her child.

"You love your instrument, don't you, Anthony?" said his visitor.

For reply, Tony went over to where his violin reposed, bent low and kissed it.

"Well, I must go now, and shall be back to-

morrow to learn your mind in the matter of my proposal, Mrs. Bosco."

So saying, he started for the door after graciously bowing to Tony's mother. Tony was at the door ahead of him and insisted on walking down the dark stairs with him. As they shook hands at the street door, Mr. White pressed a bill into Tony's hand and, before Tony could thank him or protest, was in his automobile.

Tony did not look at the money until he reached the door of his home. To his astonishment it was a twenty-dollar bill. Seeing it to be such a sum he feared his mother would oblige him to hand it back to the donor next day. He reflected that the money was handed to him, not to his mother. Surely if he accepted it there would be no reflection on his mother. He reasoned that, if with the money he got something for his mother, which would be his own gift to her, she could not reasonably object. At the same time he hesitated to accept and use the money without first acquainting her about it.

While in this frame of mind he entered the room to find his mother on her knees before a crucifix which adorned a little altar that filled the corner of the room. Her head was bowed, her hands clasped, and from her fervid lips

Tony could hear ejaculations of praise and thanksgiving to the Supreme Giver of all gifts. She was not aware of his presence until she felt his lips pressing a kiss on her forehead.

Presently she arose and sat pensive in her armchair. Tony did not disturb her thoughts for some time. Then he knelt down at her feet, laid his head on her knees and held out to her the generous gift of the visitor. To her silent look of inquiry he told her how the money was pressed into his hand without his being able to say *yes* or *no* to the gift.

"Anthony," she said, "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be His holy Name."

She then told him that only the day before she was considering what she could dispose of, in order to raise the rent-money which was overdue.

"God has His own way of answering our prayers," she said. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. He gives us the grain from the soil to nourish us, and the metals from the earth to enrich us, and He sometimes sends good people to dispense His gifts to us. Let us thank Him, Anthony, for His goodness to us."

Kneeling down, side by side, they uttered a

prayer of gratitude so fervent that it must have flown direct to heaven and reached the very heart of God. Both mother and son took out their beads and fervently recited the rosary in honor of the Blessed Mother as an act of thanksgiving to her Divine Son.

IV

THE next day Tony waited in great expectancy for the promised visit from his kind friend. Mrs. Bosco had thought the proposal over carefully, and had decided that her personal sentiments about family honor should not interfere with her son's prospects.

Tony had risen earlier than usual this morning and had hurried to the church to serve two masses instead of one, as an act of thanksgiving for the good fortune of the previous day. The first mass was at five-thirty, celebrated by one of the parish priests. The second mass was at six, and to Tony's joy the celebrant was Father Boone. Tony received Holy Communion at this mass, adding this act of devotion to his thanksgiving for God's goodness to him.

After mass, Father Boone said to him:

"Young man, you serve mass perfectly."

"Thank you, Father."

"I should always like to have a server like you, Anthony."

"And I should always like to serve a priest like you, Father."

"By the way, Anthony, did that gentleman who was looking for you yesterday find you?"

"Yes, Father; thanks to your kind direction."

"He seems very favorably impressed by you and I do hope it will mean something substantial for you."

Tony then told the priest, in a few words, the kind intentions of the gentleman.

It was now close to seven o'clock, and Tony hurried home to assist his mother preparing breakfast and setting the home in order. Not that the room needed much setting in order, but today was a great day, and everything must be perfect for the visit of their benefactor.

The breakfast was the usual one — tea and bread for the mother; milk and bread for the boy. There was not much preparation for that, but whatever work there was to it, Tony insisted on doing.

Ordinarily, between breakfast and school time Tony sold the morning papers to passers-by near the elevated station at Third Avenue and Ninth Street. But this morning he decided to stay at home not knowing when his good friend might call. If he knew that Mr. White rarely arose before nine o'clock he might have saved himself this watching.

Nine o'clock came; ten o'clock, and no Mr. White.

At eleven-thirty, when both mother and son had about given up expecting him, they heard footsteps on the stairs. Their hearts jumped. Eagerly they awaited the rap at the door. Presently it came — three businesslike knocks. Ordinarily neither of them would have associated the footsteps nor the rap with a man of Mr. White's age and character. But now the wish was father to the thought, and hardly had the knock ended when Tony was at the door.

On opening it, what was his surprise to see a messenger boy from the Postal Telegraph office. The messenger handed a telegram to Tony, and departed without asking if there was a reply. Tony passed the telegram to his mother with trembling hand. She likewise received it with agitation.

Holding it in her hand for some time, Mrs. Bosco was loath to open it. Her recent life had been so filled with disappointments that she feared this might be one more. Her concern was not so much for herself as for Anthony, who had his heart set on the prospects of the generous proposal of the good stranger. Before opening the envelope she balanced it in

her hand, held it to the light, fingered it, as if she wanted to know without really learning its contents. Or as if she feared to learn the message it held.

Finally she heaved a sigh, and, with Tony looking on breathlessly, opened the envelope and faced its contents. It read: "Sorry not to keep appointment. Letter will follow. JAMES E. WHITE."

For a space neither mother nor son uttered a word. Neither looked at the other. Both seemed to read their doom in those few lines.

Finally, assuming a buoyancy which she did not feel, the mother said:

"Well, thank God, anyway, for the good man's interest in us, and for what he has already done for us."

Then looking again at the telegram, she added:

"He's a gentleman. He had the consideration to send us word, since he could not come. Anthony, never break an appointment, if you can possibly help it. If you foresee you can't keep your word, don't fail to acquaint the persons concerned in time to save them unnecessary anxiety."

Tony's mother had the custom of taking

occasion of passing occurrences in order to emphasize some point of good breeding.

"I wonder what the letter will say, mother?"

"I'm sure I don't know, dear; but I'm prepared for a disappointment."

"Disappointments seem to be our portion, darling mother; I wonder why?"

"God knows best, dear. Our part is to trust Him and do our best. He does not ask us to understand Him but to have faith in His fatherly goodness."

"But, mother, we're doing our best; yet see where we are!"

"Son, we do not serve God for wages, but for Himself. If He rewarded us here we should be serving Him for ourselves, rather than for his own sake. God has all eternity to requite those who truly serve and love Him."

"Yes, mother; but it's hard to keep waiting and hoping and suffering."

"Anthony, if we served God only when He was doing us favors, we should be like those who are one's friends in good fortune, but desert one in misfortune. Anyone can have friends without number while dispensing favors, but the test of friendship is a friend in need."

"God is not in need, mother."

"He wants our love, dear; and love is shown by trust and sacrifice."

"O mother, then you must love God greatly, and me, too, for your life is filled with sacrifice for God and for me."

For reply, Tony's mother folded him in her arms and planted a kiss on his forehead.

After that there was silence for some time, both of them speculating on the message that the letter was to bring them. They could not imagine why a letter was to come instead of the man himself. Both of them felt in their heart that the letter would, in some way, frustrate their hopes. Neither of them however voiced what was in their thoughts. But they were prepared for, or rather expected, a cancellation of the proposal.

The mother took up her needlework, and Tony picked up his violin to practise. He had been playing scales and intervals for nearly an hour, when he branched off into tunes. The selections he played were indicative of the soul within him. He started with that old melody, *The Heart Bowed Down*. From this he passed to *Then You'll Remember Me*.

The words and melodies were quite in harmony with Tony's feelings. Although he was

pensive, he was nevertheless buoyant. What his mother had said about sacrifice being the test of love made him realize that without the Cross there would be little or no real proof of loyalty and devotion. In his heart he resolved to bear this disappointment cheerfully for the love of God. Strange to say the same thoughts were coursing through his mother's mind. She kept repeating to herself " Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

It was while mother and son were in this resigned and fortified state of mind, that almost without reflection Tony ran into that wonderful musical prayer, *The Rosary*. It was his favorite piece in serious mood. He was serious now, though not depressed — thanks to his mother's comforting words about the Cross and love. He put rosin on the bow, tuned his violin to greater accuracy, and, in prayerful mood, drew from the strings the penetrating tones which make the melody of *The Rosary* speak so tenderly to the burdened spirit.

THE ROSARY

" The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me;

I count them over, every one apart,—
My Rosary.

"Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer,
To still a heart in absence wrung;
I tell each bead unto the end, and there
A cross is hung.

"O memories that bless — and burn!
O barren gain — and bitter loss!
I kiss each bead, and strive at last to learn
To kiss the cross,
Sweetheart,
To kiss the cross." *

As Tony played the first strains of the melody, his mother dropped her work and riveted her attention on him. He seemed to be transfigured. His face was aglow with emotion. He imparted to the instrument an all but human appeal. Intense feeling coupled with artistic restraint made the violin almost to sing the very words of the melody. Tony seemed to be part of the instrument — rather, it seemed to be a part of him.

Having played the melody through, he began it again, crooning to it, or rather, praying

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the words of the song. The mother clasped her hands in prayer while her boy played and sang. Strange tears coursed down her cheeks — tears of pride, of comfort, of strength.

Tony started the third verse, singing the melody and playing an obbligato to it. Spontaneously the mother joined her boy:

"O memories that bless — and burn!
O barren gain — and bitter loss!"

At this point Tony, leaving the melody to his mother, took the alto, and continuing the obbligato on the violin, they concluded the final lines with a fervor of rendition which approached inspiration:

"I kiss each bead, and strive at last to learn
To kiss the cross,
Sweetheart,
To kiss the cross."

Suiting the words to action, the mother arose, went to the little shrine of the Blessed Mother, and taking the cross in her hands fervently kissed the Crucified. After her example Tony did likewise. Then they embraced, buoyant, strengthened, ready for whatever cross their Father in heaven might ask them to carry.

V

NO message came in the course of the day. Tony remained close to his home in expectancy of a letter from the postman; but as the time for the last delivery passed, he heaved a sigh and said to his mother:

"It was too good to be true, mother."

"Well, at all events, we're better off than before, for our rent is paid and we can make a new start, thank God!"

"You thank God for everything, mother. Of course we're grateful for what's been done, but think of the disappointment! You surely don't thank God for that?"

"For that, too, son. God knows what's best for us. Think of the good Tobias, who was doing God's work at great sacrifice, and who nevertheless was afflicted with blindness in the midst of his devoted deeds of mercy. God's ways are not our ways."

Tony had no reply to make to this, nevertheless he felt that it was strange, or rather

unfair, that good people should meet with misfortune. After a brief space, he broke out:

"It is just, mother, that people who are doing their best should get such hard knocks?"

"Anthony, my dear Anthony; are you criticising the good God?"

"Mother, don't take it that way. I'm only saying what's running through my mind."

Just then there was a knock on the door, and Tony on opening it was confronted by Father Boone.

The good priest had received a special delivery letter, in which was enclosed another letter, open, and addressed to Mrs. Bosco. The special delivery requested him to read the letter addressed to Anthony's mother, and to hand it to her that day.

The special delivery read:

"*Reverend Sir* —

You are a stranger to me, except for the brief conversation I had with you inquiring after Anthony's address. But brief as that conversation was I realised that you thought highly of the lad, and that he was fortunate in having a man like you interested in him.

"It is because of this, that I am asking

you to extricate me from a very embarrassing situation. It is briefly this: Circumstances have transpired the past few hours which oblige me to cancel my trip to Europe and to return to St. Louis by the first train.

" I promised to call on Mrs. Bosco today, to get her decision regarding a proposal I made for her son's education. I state fully in the enclosed letter to her why I cannot call and why I must recall the proposal I made her.

" I am asking you to hand her the letter (which I wish you to read previously) because I am sure, that you, in your priestly way, will be able to temper its contents with fatherly words. I hesitate to impose this disagreeable task on you, but I know that men of your profession are ever ready to do a service to those in trouble.

" Kindly break the news of the enclosed as gently as possible, and oblige

Respectfully yours

James E. White "

As Father Boone entered, Tony introduced him as " that nice priest whose mass I served this morning."

As the priest looked around the room he was impressed by the neatness and gentility of everything, including its occupants. This was the more surprising because the tenement was a shabby building, and the approaches to the various floors were anything but cleanly.

After the formalities of introduction were over, Father Boone said:

"I want to compliment you on this fine boy of yours, Mrs. Bosco. He took my fancy at first sight, and the longer I observed him the more favorably I was impressed by him."

"I thank you, Father, for your kindly interest in him."

"Whenever I see a boy who is well-mannered and neatly attired, I conclude that he has an orderly home and a refined mother; and, in Anthony's case, I am pleased to see my judgment verified."

"I don't deserve the compliment, Father; but I must say for Anthony, that he is everything that a devoted mother could desire."

"Well, that is something to thank God for."

"Indeed it is, Father; and I do thank him."

"And I thank him for my mother!" interrupted Tony.

"It is my experience of life," said the priest, "that in the long run things just about balance, if we do our part. What I mean is, that there's more in life than money or material comfort. I know lots of people who have everything, apparently, and yet they seem to have nothing, because they lack what they most desire."

"Well," interjected Tony, "money is a whole lot, just the same."

"Let me tell you a little story, or rather, an incident, Anthony. Some time ago I was talking to a poor woman who was struggling for existence. She had a bright little boy of seven. This child was her whole life. She was happy working for him. She did without lots of things for his sake, gladly. I said to her:

"'Mrs. Reilly, you are a very rich woman!' She looked at me in amazement.

"'Sure don't be poking fun at me,' she replied.

"'I mean what I said. I know a millionaire who has no children. The other day he saw your Johnnie and said to me: "I'd give half of all I possess for a boy like that."

"'Now, Mrs. Reilly, I'm willing to assure you that this man will give you a hundred thou-

sand dollars if you'll give up Johnnie and let the millionaire adopt him. What do you say to it?'

"For reply she dropped her broom and with arms akimbo, retorted:

"'I'd not give him my Johnnie for all his millions. Now let him put that in his pipe and smoke it!'

"I replied that she had proved my statement. She was richer with her Johnnie than the man with his millions."

"Mother," said Tony, striking a pose and pointing to himself, "behold your million dollars!"

The mother smiled, and in her heart breathed a prayer of gratitude for God's great gift to her.

There was a moment's silence. Father Boone judged that it was a propitious time to introduce the specific matter of his visit.

"Mrs. Bosco, I have called, not only to compliment you on Anthony, but also to deliver a message to you from that good man who promised to call today for a reply to his proposal."

At this Tony and his mother started perceptibly.

"First let me hand you a letter he wrote to me."

Father Boone then passed his letter to Mrs. Bosco and she read it through slowly. If she felt any painful emotion she did not show it. One looking at her as she read would never suspect that she was learning of the blasting of her hopes. Having read it she quietly returned it to the priest, saying:

"The good man; I'm sorry for him. He must have met with some severe blow to his prospects."

Turning to Tony, she said:

"Anthony, our good friend has suffered some calamity. We have our own little troubles, but other people have big ones."

Father Boone then handed her the letter addressed to her. After glancing at it she began to read it aloud for Tony's sake, for she thought it was better for him to hear it while the priest was with them than when they were by themselves. It was addressed to Mrs. Bosco and her son, Anthony; and read as follows:

"I keenly feel the disappointment which must have been yours, when, instead of my visit, you received word that a letter would explain my failure to call. It is because I ap-

preciate the situation that I am sending you the following particulars. I know I am not obliged to inform you of the reason for my action, since I am in nowise bound to any proposal, seeing that you did not decide to accept it at the time it was made. But I know that I raised hopes in both of you, and in justice to myself I feel obliged to explain matters.

"I have included Father Boone as a confidant with you in this affair, because I feel that through him I can make it easier for you to understand the situation.

"Briefly, it is this — I do not hesitate to inform you because it is already public news, having appeared in today's newspapers. I have a son, twenty-seven years old, who has occupied a position of trust with a leading bank of St. Louis. He was bonded by me personally. It seems that for some time past he has been engaged in speculation, and having got himself into a tight hole, could see no way of extricating himself. In desperation he used the funds of the bank, expecting not only to get himself out of the hole, but also to do so with handsome profits, from which he would repay the bank. As usual in such cases, he got him-

self deeper into the hole; and again used the bank's money. This time he was detected. Out of regard for me the bank has not caused him to be arrested but has him under strict custody. They have informed me that if I make good his loss they will not prosecute him.

"It breaks my heart to know that my boy has gone wrong. Willingly I shall give all I have to save him. But the disgrace of it may kill me. He was heavily bonded, and I may have to dispose of the house I live in to meet the demand. But I'll do it.

"Now you understand the situation, and I'm sure you will acquit me of bad faith in my intentions for your worthy boy. If in the future I find myself in a position to carry out my proposal in behalf of your son, believe me I will do it. Meanwhile, from what I saw of you and your son, I know that you are truly religious people, and I ask both of you and the good priest to pray God for me in my deep sorrow.

Respectfully

JAMES E. WHITE"

The first to break the silence which followed the reading of the letter was Tony. Walking

over to where his mother sat he kissed her and said:

"You were right, mother, to thank God, even though we have but little. We have each other, and that is much."

The mother, addressing the priest, said:

"You see, Father, before you came in we were discussing our disappointment, for we knew it was coming; nevertheless, I thanked God for his goodness to us in sending the kind man to us at all. Anthony was surprised that I thanked God after such a disappointment. He knows better now, and, good boy that he is, has acknowledged it."

"Let me say to both of you that you've brought me a little closer to God. The test of faith and love is not when we are receiving favors, but when we're asked to make or endure a sacrifice. A general knows that his troops are loyal, not by their show on parade, but by their valor on the field of blood. Life is warfare, and if we are loyal to the Great King in the hour of trial, we prove our love and loyalty. He will not be outdone in generosity. He has the eternal years to requite those who are faithful to Him."

"Thank you, Father, for those words. They will strengthen both Anthony and myself."

The priest then took his departure, Tony accompanying him down the three flights of stairs to the street door. On his return to the room he found his mother kneeling before the little altar, the rosary in her hands, and her lips moving in prayer. He knelt down beside her and together they finished the beads.

The mother was the first to speak:

"We have our cross, Anthony; but what is it in comparison with the heavy one that our good friend has to carry! Dishonor is the hardest thing to bear. I offered up the rosary that Our Blessed Mother, who had her own sorrows, would obtain for this afflicted father the grace to bear up manfully under his ordeal."

"Mother, without knowing your mind, I offered up my prayers for the same intention."

"God bless you, dear! How thankful we should be for the comfort in affliction which our Holy Faith affords us!"

"Well, mother, it's all up now — that dream of a splendid career!"

"God knows best, Anthony. We must again

face things as they are, and make the most of them."

The end of the day found mother and son back to normal. Youth will not be denied. Tony's ambition had been stirred by the kindly interest of his benefactor. The boy resolved to do for himself what the benevolent stranger had planned to do for him. It would mean effort and self-denial and struggle, but it was worth all that, and more, to arrive at a position where he could make his mother comfortable and happy.

However Tony was no dreamer. He realized that he could not run before he could walk. For some time at least he would have to go on as before, like other boys of his age. But beyond and above all routine was his dominant purpose one day to be an artist and a scholar.

Just before retiring on this eventful day, Tony went over to his mother, and whispered in her ear:

"Mother, dear, I'm going to be a great violinist some day, and you're going to be rich and happy!"

"I'm that already, Anthony," and she kissed him good night.

VI

TONY was up at five, next day. He was to serve the five-thirty mass at the church. Father Boone, who was giving the mission to the young men, was to be the celebrant of the mass. This early mass was for the benefit of those who had to be at work early and whose place of occupation was at a distance. Father Boone had told the young men that the best way to make the mission was by starting the day with a sacrifice. As Tony entered the church it was nearly filled with men from eighteen to twenty-five. Most of them were to receive Holy Communion, which meant that they had gone out into the early morning, fasting. Tony, also, was to receive, and intended to offer up his Holy Communion that God would give fortitude and guidance and comfort to Mr. White in his severe ordeal.

On his way to church to serve the early mass, Tony saw an advertisement in the window of a Postal Telegraph office. It called for

a boy to help in the office from three to six P.M., daily; and from nine to four on Saturdays.

"That just suits me!" thought Tony. "I'll hurry here after breakfast and be the first in line for the position."

Having stated the matter to his mother, she approved. Accordingly he hastened to finish his work about the home, and shortly after eight was at the door of the office — the first boy to show up. A card in the window stated that the office opened at nine o'clock. About eight-thirty the janitor arrived and, apparently without noticing the lad at the door, went in.

About a quarter to nine two messenger boys came along, entered the office, sat down, and proceeded to read the morning paper.

By five minutes to nine the manager, his secretary and the staff of messenger boys had all arrived and were arranging things preparatory to opening the door to the public.

As the hour of nine approached, Tony's heart began to thump. This job would mean very much to him. He could keep on going to school, practise his violin evenings, and at the same time help his mother with the household expenses.

About a minute to nine a burly chap, older and bigger than Tony, arrived at the place and got in front of Tony. Tony remonstrated with him, saying he had been there for an hour. For answer he received a sneer and a threatening gesture. Tony's reply was to jump between the intruder and the door and take hold of the door knob in order to hold his place. Without a word the other struck him a blow on the ear which sent him reeling to the sidewalk.

This attracted the attention of the boys in the office, who ran out to see what was up. As they got to the door they saw the boy on the sidewalk suddenly jump to his feet and rush at the other. At first there was an inclination on the part of the messenger boys to interfere, as Tony was so much smaller than his opponent. But the largest of the boys, and evidently the leader, said:

"Let them alone; let's see what the kid can do, he has fire in his eyes."

As Tony neared his assailant the latter struck out and hit him squarely on the nose. But the blow, although it staggered Tony, did not stop him. The other for a moment was amazed that this slight lad, so refined looking and delicate, was not afraid of him. Seeing the

crowd of onlookers, he was afraid to punish Tony further for fear he would be rough-handled by them, as their sympathies were manifestly with his opponent. However, he did not want a younger and lighter adversary to triumph over him, so as Tony kept coming in he again struck him hard, this time between the eyes. The blow stopped Tony momentarily. It was clear that the older boy had had experience in this sort of thing and that Tony was new to it.

Tony presented no defence at all. He left himself wide open for the blows of his opponent. He seemed to be possessed of one idea only — to reach his enemy. His sense of justice had been aroused. That fire of genius in him which made his violin vibrate with feeling, that nervous strength which enabled him to communicate so much of himself to his instrument, that feeling of outraged justice at this bully's brutality, combined to arouse him; finally, the boy in him — the real boy, in spite of his cultured breeding — asserted itself, and when boyhood asserts itself something is going to happen.

No bully is really courageous. No real boy is ever cowardly. So in spite of blows Tony

plowed in. He did not know how to fight. He did not know the rules. But he did know that this bully was assaulting him unjustly, and he was determined that it should not go unpunished.

Taking the blows as they came, and they came fast and hard, he at last got hold of his assailant by the coat collar; threw an arm around his neck; hugged him so closely he could no longer strike with effect; and then began to kick him in the shins. The very first kick caused the bully to release his hold in agony, but Tony did not release his. Holding tighter he continued to boot the bully. Suddenly he drew his leg back and delivered a terrific kick on his opponent's shin-bone. The bully groaned with pain, dropped his arms in agony and all but collapsed. There was no more fight in him. Seeing that the crowd was jeering at him, he picked himself up and slunk away.

The crowd surrounded Tony, patted him on the back, acclaimed him a real fellow, and asked him how the scrap came about. In a few words Tony told them; the manager being one of those who heard him and who had seen his plucky stand.

Tony's face was a sight. One of his eyes was swollen, his nose was bleeding, his cheeks blood-stained. The manager took him into the office, and told him to go to the lavatory and fix himself up.

While he was cleaning and doctoring himself, the messenger boys were remarking on the stamina of the boy.

"Who'd think the kid could have done it?" said the biggest boy in the group.

"That chap has guts," said another. "Why he looks like a soft kid; you'd think he'd run if he saw a fist, but, gee whiz, how he did sail into the big guy!"

The manager smiled as he heard the comments of the boys on a boy. Turning to his secretary he said:

"It takes boys to know a boy. They take a lad's measure every time, and it's always correct."

"The kid sure is plucky."

"It's more than that; I'll bet the boy needs the job badly and wasn't going to be done out of his chance. Here he comes; it didn't take him long to fix up."

So saying the manager busied himself at the desk.

Presently Tony stood before him, a little the worse for wear, but with spirit undaunted.

"Well?" interrogated the manager.

"I've come, sir, to apply for the position."

The manager was taken back by the refined manner and speech of the applicant, but he gave no evidence of his sentiments. In a kindly voice, he said:

"Tell me something about yourself, young man."

"There's not much to tell, sir. Is it about the fight you want to know?"

"I know as much about that as you do. Tell me about your home. What does your father do?"

"My father's dead," — sadly.

"And your mother?"

"I have the best mother in the world," — jubilantly.

"And who's in the home besides?"

"Just we two."

"And your name?"

"Anthony Bosco."

"Italian?"

"My father was Italian, my mother's English."

"Pardon me, Anthony, for being inquisi-

tive. It's not my way ordinarily. But I'm interested in you. Perhaps I can be a friend to you."

"O sir, I don't mind your asking. I'm glad to talk about my mother and my father. No boy ever had better."

"I like you for that, Anthony."

Meanwhile the manager was studying the lad before him, and marveling at his cultured speech. Every word he spoke was correct and well chosen, an unusual thing for a boy in that neighborhood.

"How do you happen to live down here, Anthony?"

"Well, sir, when father died, we could not continue living where we were, so we moved from time to time, as we got poorer, until we landed where we're now living."

"Do you mind, if I ask you what your father was — I mean, what his business or profession was?"

"Not at all. Father was an artist. He was a specialist at judging pictures and statuary, He was also no mean violinist, but that was just for pleasure."

The manager now understood. Here was a lad with refined upbringing, now reduced by

circumstances, but not lowered, nevertheless, by his lower station in life. He wanted to ask more about Tony's affairs, but realized that he had already gone rather far for a first interview.

"Well, Anthony, I think you're the boy for the job. I'm in need of a bright boy to carry special messages to some parties and at times I must give verbal instructions along with the messages. Also you may have to give me verbal information along with their return messages. You seem to be cut out for the job."

"I thank you, sir, and trust you will not be disappointed in me."

"You may come here Saturday morning to begin work. Your salary will be eight dollars a week."

So saying he dismissed Tony, who could not get home fast enough to tell the good news to his mother. In his pre-occupation with the good news he had entirely forgotten about the little unpleasentness which preceded it.

Running, or rather, leaping, up the steps of the three flights of stairs, he burst into the room, beaming with happiness. He was surprised to see his mother draw back in consternation. All of a sudden he recalled the fight

and the beautiful eye it gave him, to say nothing of the nose. The recollection appealed to his sense of humor and he started to laugh. His mother knew that no calamity could be behind such a spontaneous peal of mirth, so she calmed her apprehension and peacefully awaited the explanation.

Tony decided to tell the good news first.

"O mother, I've got it. I'm engaged for the place. I'm to begin Saturday and it's eight dollars a week!"

The news was certainly good, and most grateful to Mrs. Bosco; but with a mother's solicitude, she wanted to hear about that face of his before expressing herself. Tony divined her sentiments, and straightway narrated all that had occurred and just as it had occurred.

His mother was proud of him. She saw everything to admire in what her boy had done. Still she did not want to encourage pugnacity in him, so she gave no indication of her pride in his achievement and the courageous spirit which it manifested. She was very much pleased that her boy was able to take care of himself so well. Repeatedly she had warned him to avoid disputes and quarrels, but she had also told him that he must not let himself

be imposed upon. Naturally high-strung and supersensitive he had resented the injustice of the bully, so his mother felt that he had done what a young gentleman should do.

She was now in a receptive mood for the details of the transaction which Tony was so eager to impart. After hearing her son out, she remarked, just audibly:

"I wonder why he asked about your private affairs?"

"O mother, he did not do it in an objectionable way, but rather as a friend who was interested."

"Well, let us hope that it means you have found a friend to replace good Mr. White."

Just then a knock was heard on the door, and on opening it Father Boone stood before them. Directly after serving the priest's mass this day, Tony had told him about the job he hoped to get, and asked him to say a little prayer for success.

"I'm out for a little stroll around the block, and I just dropped in to hear if you got the place you were after," he said, addressing Tony, after having saluted Mrs. Bosco.

Tony then told of the morning's doings, not excepting the fight.

"Why you're a regular mule, Anthony; I had no idea you were such an awful kicker!"

"A mule kicks backwards, Father, and with his heels. I worked frontwards and with my toe."

"Well, at any rate you did a good job," and he laughed.

After a moment Mrs. Bosco said, teasingly:

"I'm surprised, Father, that you called it 'a good job.'"

"Well, what would you call it — a bad one? What was the boy to do against a rowdy who was bigger and a clever fighter?"

"O Father, and you a priest, to encourage retaliation!"

"Retaliation nothing. Protection. Self-defense is nature's law, and nature is the Creator's voice."

"And how about turning the other cheek, Father?"

"That was the Master's counsel, not a command. It was advocating heroic meekness. It was an antidote against the spirit of revenge and of the hasty resentment of wrongs. He, Himself, when struck on the face, in the court of the high priest, reprimanded and condemned His assailant."

"But how about later, when He so meekly endured the blows and insults of the rabble?"

After a moment's reflection, the priest said, rather reverentially:

"He was then giving us a heroic example of the doctrine he had preached. Moreover He was then acting as Our Saviour, redeeming us by His passion and death. The saints have practised His heroic meekness, but mankind generally has not been so heroic."

"I'm afraid, Father," Tony's mother said, with a smile, "we're making a fighter of Anthony."

"Don't be alarmed, madam; bullies are born, not made."

Here Tony struck an attitude of meekness, which so amused both his mother and the priest that they burst out laughing.

Before turning to leave, Father Boone said, with a merry twinkle in his eye:

"Keep your eye on this boy, madam; if you don't want to be the mother of a prizefighter."

After the priest had left, Tony's mother said:

"How very human the man is. I thought he would denounce you for getting in that scrimmage."

"You mean in that fight, mother; to be plain and honest that's what it was — a fight; and I'm glad he had the sense to say I was right in doing what I did, although to tell the truth I didn't think of *right* or *wrong* when I did it."

For answer his mother folded him in her arms, fondly patting him on the back as she breathed a prayer for heaven's blessing on her boy.

VII

LONG before the opening hour Saturday, Tony was at the door of the telegraph office. It happened that the manager, having some unusual and urgent business to attend to, was himself earlier than usual this morning.

Mr. Ryan had been an assistant manager at headquarters before being assigned to this branch office as manager. It was whispered about that this was but a preparation for a much higher position — in fact, the general managership. He was about forty; very kind, but also very firm and just. The employees said of him — "He's all right, if you're all right; but if you're not, look out!" His employees were devoted to him because, as they said, they were always sure of a square deal.

Seeing Tony at the door so early — it was a half-hour before the opening hour — he said:

"Good morning, sonny; you're an early bird, I see."

"Good morning, sir."

The manager entered; closed the door and was going to his desk when he suddenly turned, opened the door again, and said:

"Come in, son; sit down, you'll be on your feet a good deal today. Here's the paper. It has a page of comics which ought to hold you for a while."

So saying, he sat down at the desk, and was soon busied in figures and reports.

Tony was more interested in looking at the manager than at the comics. He noticed that as Mr. Ryan examined paper after paper, he clenched his fist, and once or twice brought it down with a bang on the desk, muttering: "Someone is tampering with this desk!"

About ten minutes to nine the secretary entered. Tony noticed that his entrance caused a frown to cloud the manager's face.

"Good morning Mr. Ryan."

"Good morning, Banks."

"You're early this morning."

"Yes, I wanted to get an important letter off by the first mail."

Tony noticed that while the manager was speaking he dexterously covered the papers he was examining, and when Banks turned for a moment, shoved them in a drawer. Tony,

although only twelve, was no mere child. He surmised at once that something was wrong, and that Banks was not unconnected with it.

By now the messenger boys were coming in. One of them smiled at Tony, and said:

"Well, how's Jack Dempsey?" and passed on to the uniform room to put on his regimentals.

Banks came out of the side room presently, and suspiciously eyed the desk and its occupant. But seeing nothing on it, nor out of place, concluded that there was nothing unusual. The secretary's desk was alongside that of the manager, and Banks was soon busy sorting papers and making annotations on them. Every once in a while he turned a cautious eye in the direction of the manager. Tony observed this, for by now he felt that something was up between the men, and that each was playing a game.

Presently, the manager said:

"I say, Banks, would you mind running down to headquarters and phone from there to that Philadelphia concern. I want the phone message to be listed from the main office. You know the details of the matter. Don't make any concession besides what we've already made."

Banks had hardly closed the door when Mr. Ryan motioned to Tony to come to his desk.

"You said your name was . . . ?"

"Anthony Bosco. I'm usually called 'Tony'."

"Well, Tony, here's your first errand. There's a man at the address on the envelope, who does not wish it known that he's receiving telegrams. That's his own business. Here is a badge to show, in case of necessity, that you're from this office. But you're not to show it unless you have to. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir. You want this delivered and a return message, if there should be one, without anyone knowing that I'm a messenger boy."

"You have it to a dot. Now off with you."

Tony delivered the message and was on his way back with a reply when, as he was within two blocks of the office, he saw the boy who had assaulted him several days before. Tony's first inclination was to turn back and make a detour around the block. While he was deciding on this, he noticed that the bully was in animated conversation with Banks. That seemed strange. Like a flash he connected the frown of the manager at the sight of Banks,

with the eagerness of the bully to get ahead of him for the position.

However he put suspicious thoughts out of his mind; turned back, and went to the office by a roundabout way. He handed the return message to the manager and went to his place to await further orders.

He did not have to wait long. His next errand was to go to a given address and accompany an elderly lady on a shopping tour. This was enjoyment for Tony. It was close to noon when he returned with a signed card stating the time of his service with the lady. Banks was alone in the office, the manager having gone out to lunch, Tony handed him the card and went to his place.

Banks seemed very nervous on the arrival of Tony. He was fussing with papers and things on his desk, seeming to be very busy, yet doing nothing. The entrance of Tony evidently irritated him. Looking around aimlessly, he finally said:

"Aren't you going to lunch, young man?"

"I — I don't know, sir," said Tony, hesitatingly. "Mr. Ryan didn't say when I was to go."

"Well, it's noon; you better go now."

"Very well, thank you, sir," and off he went.

Tony's lunch was in his pocket. It was *a la Lindbergh* — a sandwich or two. Not having any place to go in order to eat his lunch, he took it out and began eating it as he walked along the street.

In a few minutes his sumptuous meal was finished. Having nothing to do, but not wishing to return immediately to the office, he sauntered up and down the street, passing and repassing the office. He could hardly believe his eyes, when, as he was approaching the place in one of these rounds, he saw the bully come out of the office with a brief-case in his hand. Of course it was none of Tony's business. But he had taken a decided liking to Mr. Ryan, and a corresponding dislike to Banks. It did not require heavy brains to conclude that Banks was playing his employer false.

In what Tony considered due time, he returned to the office and went to his place as unconcernedly as possible. Banks eyed him narrowly. Tony buried his face in the comics of the paper, never once looking towards the man at the desk. This went on for some minutes.

Suddenly the voice of Banks broke the silence.

"Come over here."

Tony went over.

"What's your name?"

"Anthony Bosco," — dignifiedly.

"Now young man, I'm going to ask you a question, and I want no lying; do you get me?" — threateningly.

Tony said nothing.

"Do you get me, I said?"

Tony remained as before. Banks jumped up in a rage, and doubtless if it were not for fear of someone coming in would have torn the boy to pieces in his anger.

Seeing that his threats made no impression, Banks tried new tactics.

"Do you know the question I was going to ask you?"

As Tony was not a mind-reader he could truthfully answer:

"No."

"Can you guess?"

"How can I guess your mind?"

"That's not the question. Have you an idea of what I was going to ask you about?"

Tony remained silent.

"You're a slick one, you are. Now young fellow, I can make it worth while

for you to keep your mouth as shut before others as you have to me. Did you see anyone leave this office a minute or so before you came in?"

No answer.

"I know you did. You couldn't help it; and you know who he was, too. Now see here, if you'll keep your d—— mouth shut, no matter who asks you on this point, there's a ten-dollar bill for you. It's as much as your salary for a week; and, what's more, I'll see to it that you get a raise in your salary soon."

He looked steadily and inquiringly into Tony's eyes.

Ten dollars was a lot to Tony. But if it had been ten thousand his answer would have been the same.

"I don't want your money."

"I'll double it!"

"Keep it."

"I'll keep you, you d—— sneak!" and he jumped to his feet to rush at Tony. As he did so Mr. Ryan entered. There was an instantaneous change in Banks. He relaxed, began to whistle quietly, seated himself at his desk, and seemed to be unaware of the manager's entrance. Tony went to his place, very much scared and pale.

Mr. Ryan, who had not seen anything of what had transpired, went directly to his desk, and began work as usual.

Tony was in a quandary. What should he do? He knew from the attempt to bribe him that Banks was a scoundrel. What the man's scheme was, Tony did not know; but he knew that it was something seriously wrong. He believed that if he told the manager what had happened, Banks would deny it. Perhaps the villain would accuse him of something, to cover himself. Nevertheless he decided then and there to report what had transpired, in case events demanded it. However in order to have assurance that he was doing right, he determined to put the matter before his mother or Father Boone.

He was sent on one or two errands in the afternoon, and, about four, was told he could leave for the day. Banks was tremendously relieved that Mr. Ryan had not asked any questions and that Tony had not made any reference to what had occurred. In his own mind he concluded that he had thoroughly frightened the youngster, who would be afraid to say anything about what had happened. He said to himself: " I guess the kid is one of those

mamma's darlings, who think it's great not to tell a lie. I'll wring his neck if he blabs!"

On his way home, Tony decided not to worry his mother about the matter but to see Father Boone. Accordingly, before going home, he dropped around to the rectory and asked for the priest.

To his disappointment he was told that Father Boone had finished the mission to the young men and had gone to his own church, uptown. As it was early, Tony decided to go to the address given. It was pretty far uptown — too far to walk there and get home again in due time; so, although he could ill-afford it, he took the elevated, parting with a precious nickel for the luxury, or rather necessity, of a ride.

Father Boone was immensely surprised to see his altar boy.

"What in the name of Bunker Hill brought you up here, Anthony?"

"I want your advice, Father. I'm doing nicely in my job, and mother is pleased. Today something happened and I'd like your opinion on just how to act in the matter."

"So you've come to consult your legal adviser?" smilingly.

"It's this way, Father. A man in the office is acting strangely. The manager is awfully put out about something, and, from what appears, this man seems to be the cause of the trouble."

"Well, son, my advice is to mind your own business; the manager will look after his."

"But Father, I've not told you all."

Tony then narrated all that had occurred. The priest was in admiration of the boy's sense of honor, and also of his delicate regard for his mother.

"My advice now, Anthony, is this. It looks to me as if the secretary was betraying a trust. His attempt to silence you is all but proof. However, we must not judge the man. But what you are justified in doing, and what you should do, is to narrate to the manager everything you have stated to me. The case then rests with him, and you will have done your part."

"That's just what I myself thought the right thing to do."

He thanked Father Boone and left.

The next Monday afternoon, on his way after school to the office, he was suddenly confronted by the bully.

"You high-toned kid, if you open your mouth about seeing me at the office Saturday,

I'll knock your block off. See?" He made a vicious motion with his fist to illustrate the catastrophe. As Tony said nothing, the brute continued:

"You can't get away from me. I'll trail you no matter where you go, and you'll be mamma's little boy in a coffin, if you play me dirty. See?"

So saying he swaggered off.

As Tony entered the office the manager was cross-questioning one of the messenger boys, who stoutly denied every insinuation made against him. The manager did not observe Tony's entrance, but Banks did; and, in doing so, gave him a warning look. Tony went to his place and sat down, awaiting orders.

The manager was quite heated as he spoke to the messenger boy.

"You were seen at this desk Saturday noon. How dare you deny it?"

The boy said with tears:

"It's a lie. I'm no thief; I never stole in my life."

"Mr. Banks saw you. Do you suppose I'd take your word against his?"

At this the boy picked up a metal clock from

the desk, and, before anybody realized what he was up to, flung it straight at Banks' head, at the same time calling him an unmentionable liar.

There was momentary panic in the room. Banks was bleeding from the forehead; the manager was paralyzed with consternation; the messenger boy stood trembling with emotion; and Tony, dreadfully frightened, moved as far from the disturbance as possible without leaving the room.

The manager's first act was to run to Banks' side and apply his handkerchief to the brow of the bleeding man. Banks was more frightened than hurt. The cut was a superficial one, and as Banks did not want to create a scene, or rather, intensify the present one, he smiled off the assault, saying:

"Now you have evidence of what sort of rowdy the fellow is."

To which the boy, not at all intimidated, replied:

"You call me a rowdy again, and you'll get a worse dose. You're a liar and a crook; that's what you are!"

While the boy was speaking, Banks gave Tony a threatening look. He evidently con-

cluded that if Tony told what he knew it would corroborate the messenger boy, and that all would be up with himself.

At this juncture, Tony, unmindful of Banks' threatening look and former threats, advanced towards the manager, and said:

"Mr. Ryan, if you'll allow me to speak, I think I can say something that will help to clear up this thing."

The manager was greatly surprised at Tony's remark. His first thought was that, after all, there might be an explanation which would show that both Banks and the messenger boy were in a false position. So he said, assuringly:

"Speak out, my boy."

"May I see you alone, sir, please?"

"I'd rather you'd say what you have to say in the presence of these two who are concerned in the affair."

Tony then told in straightforward fashion what he had seen, and what Banks had said and done. As he neared the end of his narration the messenger boy came up and shook his hand warmly.

Banks meanwhile had drooped in his chair, and when Tony had finished, was in utter

collapse. Of course it was now all clear to the manager. The dishonest secretary knew only too well that he was done for. Coward that he was, he pleaded for consideration, promised to make good what he had stolen, and begged to be saved from disgrace.

"Mr. Banks, consider yourself discharged," said the manager; and added: "Futher action will depend on circumstances."

Here Tony broke in, tears in his eyes:

"O mister, please, let him off; think of how it will hurt his mother if he's arrested!"

The manager looked at Tony for a moment, perceived the deep emotion that stirred him, and turning to Banks, said:

"Make good what you've pilfered, Banks, and I'll not proceed against you."

Here Banks' better nature asserted itself. Walking over to Tony he extended his hand, saying:

"I'm grateful to you; I didn't expect it of you."

He then put on his hat and coat and walked out, an apology of a man.

Hardly had he closed the door when Mr. Ryan turned apologetically to the messenger boy:

"I'm very sorry, George, for my mistake."

"You could hardly help it, sir, the way that man lied."

"Well, George, it showed you had character. When I saw your vigorous resentment at a dishonorable charge, I had pretty much concluded you were being framed."

"Thank you, sir."

"And, George, in my own way and time, I'll show you that you're none the worse for what's happened. You may have the rest of the day off."

Then turning to Tony, he said:

"Sit down, young man."

The manager looked at him admiringly.

"Unfortunately, I have no son, but if I had a boy, I'd like him to be such as you are."

Tony blushed his thanks.

"He offered you ten dollars to keep your mouth shut, did he?"

"Yes, Mr. Ryan."

"And you didn't keep it shut, did you?"

Tony smiled.

"Well, I'm going to give you twenty-five for opening it — No, don't protest — It's not charity. It's worth much more than that for me to know what I now know."

The tears came to Tony's eyes.

"Why, what are you crying for, Tony?"

"I'm — not cry — ing — sir — I'm just think — thinking — of what this m — means to mother."

VIII

AFTER leaving the office, Tony, instead of going directly home, turned aside a few blocks in order to go to the church. As usual he found a few devout worshippers there — some saying the rosary, one making the stations of the cross, some kneeling before the various shrines. He felt as though he owned the earth. In his pocket were twenty-five dollars — four five-dollar bills, and five one-dollar bills. He went up to the altar rail, knelt down before his Sacramental Lord and thanked Him for the day's blessings. He poured out his grateful heart to the King of kings, the Ruler of mankind, the Lord of the world.

There came to his mind the words of the sermon of the preceding Sunday. The priest was speaking on Christ's miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, and the feeding of the multitude. He said that people wondered at this manifestation of divine power. — "But," he went on to say, "every day God feeds the whole world out of the soil of the earth. How

does the wheat come from the soil? How but by His power who made the seed, and the elements of the soil, and who made the sun to shine and the rain to fall. It is a greater miracle to feed the whole world every year from the soil than to feed a few thousand with a few loaves. But we are not astonished at God's feeding the world because we are accustomed to it."

At the time, this sermon made a deep impression on Tony. It was Father Boone who preached, and after the mass, of which Tony was the altar boy, he said to the priest:

"That was all new to me, Father; I never looked at it that way before."

"That's God's way, son. He does most things by secondary causes. But He is the real Cause Himself. Men and things are employed by Him to do His will; that's why He's King of kings, and Lord of the earth."

So, now, as Tony knelt before Christ the King, he thanked Him primarily for the good fortune of the day. Realizing also that he who loves his mother desires to see her honored, he went before the shrine of Our Blessed Mother, and prayed her to join him in thanking her Divine Son. Fervently he uttered the daily prayer of her countless children:

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

He spent some minutes in loving converse with the Mother of God, with whom he was as spiritually intimate as he was with his own mother. Mary to him was not a far-off celestial being enthroned in glory, but a tender, ever-present and solicitous mother. The Blessed Mother and his own mother were to him the greatest realities in the world. He realized that God came to us through Mary, and that we could best go to Him through her.

Having finished his devotions of gratitude. Tony approached the poor-box, and drawing from his pocket the roll of bills extracted a dollar and dropped it in the box, saying as he did so:

"In thanksgiving, dear Lord and Blessed Mother, for the bounty of this day."

Then he hurried home. Up the stairs he galloped as never before, burst open the door and bounded into the room and the arms of his mother. He was almost hysterical with joy. In

fact at first his mother was alarmed at the excess of his emotion, thinking that something untoward had happened. However this fear was quickly dispelled as his beaming eyes caught hers.

When he had regained his breath and composure he told the day's doings to the most attentive and charmed audience conceivable. While he was describing his scorn at the proffered bribe she stooped down and kissed him. Again, as he told of his coming forward, despite the threatening looks of Banks, to tell the manager what he knew, his mother tenderly kissed him on the forehead. But when he told of his interceding for his enemy, she folded him in her arms, and tears of pride and joy trickled down her cheeks. When he ended she held him by the hand, and said:

"God bless you, son!"

The money, much as it meant, was secondary both to her and Tony. She had rather be the mother of such a boy than be the richest mother in the world. And he would rather please her and win her approbation than have ten times the money he now held in his hand. Not that either of them undervalued the money, but both understood that there is something in

life which money can not purchase, and each felt he had that in the other.

Tony helped his mother get the evening meal; and when their frugal repast was about ready, said:

"Don't you think we ought to celebrate, Mother?"

As she looked an interrogation, he went on:

"How about something extra for Mumsy?"

"Only for Mumsy, dear?"

"Well, you can count me in, I guess,"— with a sly glance.

Down the stairs he ran and out into the street. Straight to a boy's delight he hurried — an ice-cream parlor! Cake, ice-cream, a bottle of soda and some candy made the sum of his purchase run up to eighty cents. He gave ten cents to a forlorn-looking lad who stared at him with eyes of envy. The lad was as much pleased with the dime as Tony was with his big fortune.

It did not take him long to reach home. His mother, although not fond of sweets, fell in with the mood of the occasion, and clapped her hands at sight of what Santa Claus was bringing. The substantial part of the meal was shared

by both. Most of the extras somehow found their way to Tony.

When it was all over, the mother took to her needle, and Tony to his violin, after doing the dishes, etc. For a half-hour he practised scales and positions, but the emotions of the day were clamoring for expression. Gradually he worked his way through several favorite melodies, coming at length to one that seemed to fit his mood and the occasion: *The Lord is My Shepherd.*

"The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know;
I feed in green pastures, safe-folded I rest;
He leadeth my soul where the still waters flow,
Restores me when wandering, redeems when oppressed.

"Through the valley and shadow of death though I stray,
Since Thou art my Guardian, no evil I fear;
Thy rod shall defend me, Thy staff be my stay;
No harm shall befall, with my comforter near.

"In the midst of affliction my table is spread;
With blessings unmeasured my cup runneth o'er,
With perfume and oil Thou anointest my head;
Oh, what shall I ask of Thy Providence more!

"Let goodness and mercy, my bountiful God,
Still follow my steps till I meet Thee above;
I seek by the path which my forefathers trod,
Through the land of their sojourn, Thy kingdom of love."

Tony first played the melody through very softly. Its stately rhythm, so appropriate to the sublime sentiments of the psalm, seemed to inspire him. As he was about to begin the melody a second time, he attached a mute to his instrument which gave it the effect of a mellow, distant sound. He was familiar with the words, having often sung them with his mother, even when he was a little tot, when his father played as they sang.

Somehow he always associated his beloved father with this psalm. It was one of the first melodies he had learned to play, and seldom did he play it without uttering an earnest prayer for the repose of his father's soul.

One of the things which his mother clung to was an old-fashioned harp which she had learned to play at her convent school, but which she had not touched since her husband's death. Formerly she used to accompany her husband on this harp whenever he played *The Lord is My Shepherd*. As Tony imparted his spirit to the melody he was now playing, his violin seemed almost human. It all but voiced the words of the psalm.

It seemed to his mother that he never before played with quite the inspiration he was now manifesting. Deeply moved, she went quietly to the corner where the harp stood and took it in her hands. She was almost afraid to tune it, for fear of distracting her boy. Very delicately, however, she finally got it into fairly good condition and as Tony for the third time began the melody she softly accompanied him. She, too, was in the mood for this entrancing psalmody.

Tony's playing inspired his mother, and her sympathetic accompaniment enkindled in him the fire of genius, albeit budding genius. He drew the bow over the strings in the grand manner, playing double notes to the strains of the psalm, and now and then introducing a

variation, to which his mother was quick to adapt her accompaniment. It was a little bit of heaven.

After playing thus for a space, Tony returned to the simple melody, at the same time intoning the psalm in a clear and melodious voice. His mother joined him, her soprano and his alto blending beautifully, and forming a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the good God who had been to them a Shepherd indeed.

The touch of the harp seemed to recall pleasant memories to Tony's mother. For a while after they had finished the duet she sat pensive. Then turning to her boy, she said:

"Anthony, let's play some of those melodies your father and I used to enjoy. He was very fond of one called *Mother in Ireland.*" *

"I also like that, mother; and you know why!" So, together they sang and played:

"Mother in Ireland, I want you to know,
I've walked in the path that you taught me to go.
And when I'm in doubt and don't know what to do,
I call to my mind the last farewell to you.

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" Mother in Ireland, I see you through tears,
Trying so bravely to hide all of your fears.
Since I've been away very plainly I see,
How great was the burden you bore all for me.

" You smiled through the dark years of trouble and care —
The trouble you never allowed me to share.
But now I've enough of the world's goods for two;
Mother in Ireland, I'm coming to you!"

As they finished, Tony's mother said:

"Anthony, dear, you have lived that song today, — 'I've walked in the path you taught me to go.' You were Mother's brave and honorable boy in courageously doing your duty regardless of threats or promises. And in another way you have lived the song today, — 'But now I've enough of this world's goods for two.' The princely sum you brought home, so honorably obtained, is indeed enough for us two, at least for some time."

"Well, mother, if I've lived the song today, you've lived it all your life, — 'You smiled through the dark years of trouble and care;

the trouble you never allowed me to share.' — Now, who's it? "

" Bless you dear, how good God is to give me such a boy! "

" And to me such a mother! "

No one could blame them if they kissed after that duel.

" We've been awfully serious tonight, mother. Let's have a cheerful song."

" What do you suggest, dear? "

" Let's sing Daddy's favorite."

" You mean *Santa Lucia?* "

" You said it, mother! "

" O Anthony, that's slang; can you not say that another way? "

" O mother, you're so particular. The boys poke fun at me for what they call my stuck-up language — only they don't say *language,* but a word I dare not repeat."

" Well, son, you can acquire slang any time, but if you are to be a gentleman you must use the language of the cultured, and they do not stoop to vulgarities."

" All right, mother. Now let's have *Santa Lucia.*"

So saying, he took up his violin, and she her

harp, and together they first played and then sang the rollicking Neapolitan tune.

"Moonlight so sweet and pale,
From heaven falling;
Wavelets that murmer low,
To us are calling.
White is the summer night;
Summer sea, silver bright.
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!

"Soft winds that come and go,
Coolness are bringing;
Bearing on gentle wings,
Echoes of singing.
Waits the light boat for thee;
Float o'er the waves with me.
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!

"Oh, joy to lie at rest,
Drifting and dreaming;
On ocean's peaceful breast,
'Neath moonlight gleaming.
Bride of the summer sea,
Naples, thy child to be.
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!"

From the start Tony entered into the playful spirit of this boat-song and sang it with vigor.

Not so his mother. It was in Naples that she first met Tony's father. She was only a girl of nineteen then, on her way to Florence to an art school. Two years later she was Mrs. Bosco. As she began the song she did so in a very pensive mood. It was full of recollections of the most joyous period of her life. Gradually, however, she fell under the spell of the frolicsome melody, and when it came to the third verse she entered into it as heartily as Tony.

They wound up the song in gay mood.

"Mother, this is the happiest you've been since — well, for several years."

"Well, Anthony, I am happy tonight. Every cloud has the sun behind it, and the sun has shone for us today."

"While we're at it, mother, how about Daddy's other favorite?"

"You mean *Funiculi, Funicula?*"

"If you don't mind."

"I'm hardly able for that, dear, it's too rollicking; I could hardly join in its spirit of *abandon*."

"O mother!"

"Please don't, Anthony."

"Try, mother, it will do you good."

Without further ado, he picked up his instrument, and, with beaming countenance, struck up the irresistible tune.

"Some think the world is made for fun and frolic,
And so do I; and so do I!
Some think it well to be all melancholic,
To pine and sigh; to pine and sigh!
But I, I love to spend my time in singing
Some joyous song; some joyous song!
To set the air with music bravely ringing,
Is far from wrong; is far from wrong!

"Listen, listen, echoes sound afar!
Listen, listen, echoes sound afar!
Funiculi, funicula,
Funiculi, funicula,
Echoes sound afar!
Funicula, funicula!

"Ah me! 'tis strange that some should take to sighing,
And like it well; and like it well!
For me, I have not thought it worth the trying,

So cannot tell; so cannot tell!
With laugh, with dance and song the day soon passes,
Full soon is gone; full soon is gone!
For mirth was made for joyous lads and lasses
To call their own; to call their own!

"Listen, listen, hark the soft guitar!
Listen, listen, hark the soft guitar!
Funiculi, funicula,
Funiculi, funicula,
Hark the soft guitar?
Funicula, funicula!"

Tony finished the song with a flourish and looked towards his mother.

"Why, mother, you're laughing!"

"How can I help it, dear; that song would make any one laugh."

"Right you are, Mumsy dear! Oh, I beg pardon, mother," as he saw an incipient frown on his mother's face at the sound of his slang.

"Do you know, Anthony, I think that you're better at singing than at playing the violin!" Then, seeing a look of disappointment come over him, she added: "Not that you're not awfully good at the violin, but there's some-

thing in your voice which just seems to reach one's heart."

"They say that of my violin playing, too, mother."

"Well, dear, it means that you are an artist. You have that wonderful gift of God of making others share your own emotions and aspirations."

"That's good, coming from you, mother; for you seldom praise."

"I'm just stating what you ought to know for your own benefit, dear. If you realize you have an unusual talent it will help you develop it.

"And now, Anthony, since we've had such a wonderful day, suppose we end it with that beautiful song *A Perfect Day*." *

"O mother, I love that song, and since you think my singing is so good, let me sing it without the violin. I'm sure I can put more into it, if I'm not distracted with playing."

So saying, he laid down his violin, and stood at her side, while she fingered an accompaniment on the harp.

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"When you come to the end of a perfect day,
And you sit alone with your thought,
While the chimes ring out with a carol gay,
For the joy that the day has brought;
Do you think what the end of a perfect day
Can mean to a tired heart,
When the sun goes down with a flaming ray,
And the dear ones have to part?

"Well, this is the end of a perfect day,
Near the end of a journey, too;
But it leaves a thought that is big and strong,
With a wish that is kind and true.
For mem'ry has painted this perfect day
With colors that never fade,
And we find, at the end of a perfect day,
The soul of a friend we've made."

As the song ended the mother's eyes filled with tears — tears of fond recollection, tears also of pride in her boy. Tony drew nearer his mother and knelt at her side, his head on her knees. For several minutes she fondled his hair, and then, gently turning his face upwards, bent low and kissed him on the forehead. Neither spoke for a few minutes. It was Tony who broke the silence:

"Mother, God is in music, isn't He?"

"He's in your music, son."

IX

THE next day, after school, Tony went to the office for his afternoon's work. A new man was at the desk of Banks. George, who had been in a messenger's uniform up to yesterday, was now in civilian dress, and seated at a small desk, sorting mail. Mr. Ryan had made practical reparation for the wrong done the youth by advancing him to a position in the office, from which it was possible for the right kind of boy to rise to a lucrative place.

As Tony entered he bowed to Mr. Ryan, and took his seat in his appointed place. George gave him a grateful look. In a few moments he was called to the manager's desk, and given an assignment to accompany the elderly lady again.

On reporting to her he found that she wanted him to accompany her to a semi-private musicale at the Waldorf-Astoria. When she told him where she was going, Tony hesitated for a moment, then said:

"But madam, I'm in my every-day clothes; I'm not fit for such an affair."

"You're a little gentleman no matter what you wear, and you're always neat and clean, so come along."

She had previously ordered her chauffeur to have the car in readiness; so a minute or two after he had reported, Tony found himself in a Packard with his elderly charge.

As they rolled noiselessly along the avenue in the palace on wheels, the lady turned to him and said:

"You are to take these tickets and present them for me and you. Then you must lead me into the music chamber and see that I am seated before you take your seat alongside me. Is it clear, now, what I want you to do?"

"Entirely so."

She was rather amazed at his perfect composure and immediate understanding of what she wanted.

She was more amazed later on, when, like a Chesterfield, he carried out her orders to a nicety.

Mrs. Morley, for that was her ladyship's name, was an eccentric widow of some sixty-five summers. She had an utter dislike of going

out alone, and yet had no friends who found her interesting enough to go out with her. She had previously had a maid-companion, but for some reason had an aversion to her own sex. So she lived by herself at a luxurious Park Avenue hotel, and had all her wants attended to by the hotel staff. She was immensely wealthy. After dismissing her maid-companion, she had called up the telegraph office for a boy to accompany her whenever she went out. But as the uniform of the messenger boy made her conspicuous she asked the office to send her a nice boy without uniform.

This it was that led to the advertisement which caught the eye of Tony and brought him to the notice of the manager. Mr. Ryan no sooner saw Tony than he made up his mind that he was made to order for his patroness. Of course, he did not inform Tony that he was wanted for this specific job, but left him under the impression that he was engaged for work of any kind, as indeed he was.

The lady, not knowing that Tony's main employment was to be at her call, had phoned for a boy this day, saying:

"I wish you would send the boy who came Saturday."

The manager smiled at this, being pleased that his patroness was satisfied with his selection.

While Tony and his charge were seated, waiting for the musicale to begin, she turned to him, and said gently:

"Are your father and mother living?"

"Only my mother."

"You must have a wonderful mother."

"If you only knew her!" As he spoke there was a worshipful look in his eyes.

The musicale was to be a violin recital by the world-renowned artist, Mischa Heifitz. It was for invited guests only; and was presented by a very wealthy admirer of the violinist.

Everything about the place was a revelation to Tony. The palatial vestibule of the hotel; the luxurious lounge-room; the brilliantly illuminated corridors; and now this music room, so artistically furnished. Tony had been taught never to show surprise no matter how much he was impressed by surroundings. His cultured mother had instilled into him that reserve and self-mastery which characterize the well-bred. Tony, even in his every-day clothes, might have passed for Little Lord Fauntleroy.

Several ladies near-by were distinctly attracted by his spiritual countenance and perfect poise. Mrs. Morley was not at all displeased at the favorable notice which her escort received. Tony was altogether unaware of it. He was entirely taken up with the gorgeousness of the surroundings.

Presently there was a cessation of conversation in the room, and then a marked silence. Out onto the platform came Heifitz. Rapturous applause greeted him, to which he seemed absolutely indifferent. It had been his daily meed since he was a child of five. He stood for a moment, dreamily, while his accompanist at the piano played the introduction to the selection.

As the time approached for him to begin, the violinist raised his instrument to his shoulder and poised it statuesquely. He stood before his audience like an ancient Grecian god carved in marble. Apparently he was unmoved, but it was the artistic restraint, which veiled the dynamic force within him. He played so effortlessly that a person would never imagine that he was performing the most difficult music ever composed for the violin. There was no swaying motion, no straining, or bending of

the body as he executed the most intricate bowing and fingering. He was aggravatingly unconcerned, apparently, yet a living volcano of surpressed emotion. He could not have been more motionless, except for arm and fingers, if carved in marble.

The tone that issued from his instrument was that rich mellow sound which seemed to belong to a living voice only. The notes rang clear and distinct, the bowing was accurate and elegant, the melody soared from the strings and hung in the air like a thing of life. The air vibrated with exquisite harmony, which seemed to belong to a celestial rather than terrestrial sphere.

When the number was finished a dead silence ensued for the fraction of a moment — the highest tribute to a performer. The audience was carried to such heights that it was some seconds before they realized that they had been transported to fancy's realms. But the realization came with thunderous applause. The enraptured audience lost itself in enthusiasm.

While the applause was at its height, the ladies who had previously noticed Tony, happened to glance in his direction. One of them said to her companion:

"Look at the boy; he's in a trance."

She had not intended her voice to be heard by anyone except her companion, but it was so loud that a circle of those near-by heard it. They looked in the direction of her glance, and, surely enough, there was Tony out of himself. He was perfectly oblivious of everything around him. The people and the applause meant no more to him than if he were in the middle of the Atlantic. His gaze was fixed on the realm to which his fancy bore him. He was in the land of ecstasy, the home of castle-building, the mind's spiritual paradise.

When he came to earth he was astonished to see himself the object of an admiring circle. His descent from the clouds was preluded by a gasp which articulated — "God!"

One of the ladies rushed to his side and in her fervor kissed his open lips. That brought Tony to himself at once. Except from his mother, Tony, as most boys, regarded a kiss as an indignity, a weakness, a sissy thing.

Mrs. Morley was not reluctant to be the object of the circle's envy. She heard one woman say:

"What a proud woman she must be, to be the mother of that boy."

To which came the reply, not at all welcome to Mrs. Morley:

"His mother! You mean his grandmother."

Meanwhile Tony was wondering what it was all about. Before he could find out, Heifitz appeared for his next number. He was rapturously received. Tony was all eyes.

Those who have heard Heifitz in Symphony Hall, Boston, or Carnegie Hall, New York, and witnessed the worshipful attitude of the audience and its frenzied applause, will understand the all but adoration which this intimate audience felt and showed for its idol. Here they were close to him. They could almost hear his suppressed breathing. They could see his delicate fingers as they deftly touched the strings, and gaze into his eyes aflame with the inspiration he imparted to his instrument.

With rapt attention they heard his second and last number. As he finished there was a spontaneous rush to the platform. Again and again he was obliged to present himself and bow his acknowledgments. But he was apparently as indifferent to it all as if he were made of stone. Not a muscle of his face moved, not the suspicion of a smile showed itself on his countenance. To him it was all so habitual that

it had lost its significance. He appeared and acknowledged the acclaim as a matter of routine, as part of his daily life, as a corollary to his artistic triumphs.

To Tony he was all but an apparition. With open mouth and eyes as big as saucers his gaze was riveted on the genius before him.

The demonstration of hero-worship over, the audience gradually departed. Several stopped to say a passing word to Tony, on whom it was all lost, for he was still in a reverie.

Mrs. Morley was the last to leave the hall. Just as she was about to depart, one of the ladies who had been impressed by Tony returned, and went back of the platform to the side room where Heifitz was engaged putting away his violin and making ready for the street. This lady evidently knew the artist for she walked into the room without hesitation or formality.

Meanwhile Tony and his charge were on the way to the exit, Tony still in a daze. Presently the lady touched Mrs. Morley on the shoulder, and said:

"I beg your pardon; but would you mind coming with your boy to see Mr. Heifitz for a moment?"

If a voice from heaven had sounded on his ears, it could hardly have been more surprising or grateful to Tony. He gave an involuntary start and looked appealingly at Mrs. Morley. She, for reply, turned about, and followed the lady to the master of the king of instruments. Tony was beside himself with the joyful anticipation of seeing and possibly touching the man who had thrilled and transported him.

As they entered the room the lady said to Heifitz:

"This is the boy you asked me about."

It seems that while the audience was frantically applauding him, Heifitz, who saw more than he appeared to see, observed Tony, as it were in a trance, eyes wide open, lips apart, and face alight with ecstasy.

There was something of another and better world in the spiritual aspect of Tony's countenance at certain times. While listening to this master of the instrument he himself loved so much, the spirituality of his nature revealed itself unmistakably. It was this that caught the attention of Heifitz and made an unusual impression on him.

Now the worshipped and the worshipful were face to face. Tony was oblivious of every-

thing. At this moment there was for him but one object in all the world. His admiration for his hero was so great that it paralyzed action. He stood, as it were, hypnotized. Heifitz thought that he had never seen such an other-world apparition in human form. For a moment he, too, was actionless. Then he held out his hand to Tony, who in a dazed sort of way approached him.

Looking up into the face of Heifitz as he took the master's hand, his eyes were aglow with that something which only the soul of the born artist reflects. It was some seconds before he could utter a word. Then it came spontaneously, rapturously, heedless of everybody and everything, expressive of the dominating thought of his soul:

"God is wonderful in you!"

That was all he could say. He was dumb with awe.

Heifitz, who had shown no sign of emotion at the frantic applause which had greeted him previously, was visibly affected by this tribute from Tony. A childlike smile broke over the face of the great artist as he patted the boy on the head. Then he said:

"You're fond of music, are you?"

"It's my life, sir."

"Do you play any instrument?"

Tony was too full to reply in words. He pointed to the violin.

"You play the violin?"

Tony bowed assent.

At this Heifitz opened the violin case and handed the instrument to Tony. One would have to know how jealously a musician guards his instrument, particularly if it be — as this was — a Strad., in order to realize the impression which the boy made on the virtuoso.

"Let's see what you can do."

"O sir, I'd be ashamed to touch it after you."

"Well, let's see what you can do; just play as if we were not here."

Tony had accustomed himself to the full-sized violin by playing on his father's, but he was not, nevertheless, quite large enough to handle it perfectly. Of course Heifitz saw this, but, notwithstanding, was curious to see what this lad with the seraphic face would do with the instrument.

Tony touched the violin with awe.

"I can only play simple things, sir."

"Of course, my boy, but it's in simple things that art is shown."

"Art? Oh, I'm far from that!"

So saying he drew the bow gracefully across the strings. Then he ran his fingers up and down the scale. Finally his face grew serious, other-worldly. He seemed to be in a sphere by himself. Gently, restrainedly, with composure and mastery he broke into the strains of Arcadelt's *Ave Maria.*

This is the most reverential and prayerful of all the *Ave Marias.* Those who remember the *Ben Greet Players,* in their presentation of *Everyman,* will recall this melody, played as a 'cello solo during the most spiritual episode of the performance.

To Tony, whose faith was deep and tender, and whose love for the Blessed Mother was one of the strongest sentiments of his nature, this stately and spiritual melody made a special appeal. Sometimes for an hour at a time he would play it over and over. His mother observed that it was his favorite whenever he was particularly devout, as for instance, after he had heard a sermon which had touched him deeply, or after witnessing some impressive ceremony such as the first Holy Communion of children.

Of course Tony was only a child, and his

playing lacked that conviction which maturity alone gives. However, a child with soulful nature and artistic tendencies may often surpass his elders in expression, if not in technique. Tony's distinctive quality was expression, and that may be shown in a simple melody as well as in a concerto.

As he began to play Heifitz studied him minutely. He was quick to observe the absorption of the boy in his performance. As the lad proceeded, Heifitz, slow ordinarily to enthuse, began to show admiration for the marvelous interpretation and execution displayed.

Of all pieces, this was perhaps the best suited to Tony's spiritual disposition. The playing of Heifitz had aroused in him the religious emotion which had found verbal expression in those words: "God is wonderful in you!"

This same religious emotion he was now expressing through the medium of the wonderful instrument he held in his hands. At the first touch of the bow he was thrilled by its almost human tone. He had heard of Stradivarius, but never before did he realize the full, round, rich tone which a Strad. gave in response to the touch of the bow.

The occasion, the instrument, his own sen-

timents, and the character of the piece he was playing, combined to make his performance a matter of astonishment even to Heifitz.

His soul seemed to enter into each note that voiced in sound the words of this prayer which was first uttered by the Ambassador of God to the Maid of Nazareth: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."

Thus, centuries ago did Gabriel salute the Mother of God. Countless pious souls have since repeated those words in prayer, and some of the world's greatest geniuses have chosen them as their inspiration for vocal or instrumental creations.

"*Ave Maria, gratia plena!*" — "Hail Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Tony finished the melody with a pianissimo *amen*, which made it seem like a distant angel's voice.

For a moment after finishing, Tony was not quite himself. He had been in another realm, a spiritual world. He seemed to be under the spell of his own playing.

In a dazed manner he handed the violin to the master. While doing so his lips began unconsciously to voice the words of the melody. Almost without realizing it he was softly singing it. As he proceeded with the air Heifitz automatically raised the violin to his shoulder and played an exquisite obbligato. Tony caught fresh inspiration from the delicate strains of the violin. Very much as a heavenly messenger might carol the angelic salutation did this wonder-boy chant it. When it ended Tony looked seraphic.

Slowly he came back to the land of mortals. Heifitz, too, for a brief space was entranced. Tony's return was accelerated by presently finding himself in the folded arms of the artist.

"Bravo! Bravo!" he heard whispered in his ears.

Hardly had Heifitz released him when he found himself in the entanglements of the two women, both of whom simultaneously insisted on kissing him. Tony was at a loss to understand it all.

Heifitz made a motion to Mrs. Morley to step aside with him for a moment. What the nature of the conversation was neither Mrs. Morley nor Heifitz revealed. However, it was

noticeable that both looked significantly and approvingly at Tony as they came back from their conference.

Heifitz, in saying good-bye to Tony, patted him on the head and gave him a love-tap on his cheek. Tony could only express his appreciation by grateful eyes.

Mrs. Morley, on the way home, showed an altogether different regard for her escort. It was a feeling of reverence and motherly tenderness. All the way home, although Tony was at her side in the car, she did not say a word. When the car reached her home, instead of dismissing Tony, she told him to come with her to her apartment.

When he was seated in her luxurious drawing room, Mrs. Morley took a chair alongside his and spoke to him slowly and deliberately.

"Do you go to school?"

"Yes, madam."

"You work, then, only after school hours and on Saturdays?"

"Yes, lady."

"It's not my business, but do you mind if I ask you what salary you receive?"

"I get eight dollars a week."

"And your mother; what does she do?"

"Needlework, when she can get it."

"Have you been taking lessons on the violin?"

"Until lately. My teacher said he could do no more for me. But I can not afford to go to a better one."

"Well, my boy; what is it your name is?"

"Anthony Bosco."

"Well, Anthony, will you and your mother come to see me this evening? I'll have William call for you at seven-thirty. Your address, please?"

Tony was beside himself with joy. He gave the address; thanked the lady, and was about to leave when she suddenly called to him to wait a minute.

Although she was very eccentric, she was nevertheless a kindly and considerate woman. From Tony's few words about his home she gathered that the Boscos were in rather straitened circumstances. Of course, Tony had not told her of the "rain-fall" which dropped twenty-five dollars on them so recently. Going to a desk she drew out a purse and took from it two five-dollar bills. Returning she said to him:

"Anthony, give this to your mother, please."

On perceiving that it was money, he said:

"I thank you very much, but you must pardon me for refusing it."

No persuasion on her part could induce him to take it. As he left, grateful, but firm in his refusal, she realized that she was dealing with a little gentleman as well as an artist.

Tony hurried home and ran up the stairs without a stop, so that when he opened the door he was all out of breath. His flushed cheeks and radiant eyes told his mother that he had good news. As soon as he was able to articulate, he began, in gasps, to tell what the afternoon had brought to him. He was so excited that his mother bade him sit down and say no more until he was completely rested. She had not understood a thing he said, except to gather that it was something unusually fortunate.

When she thought that he was sufficiently composed, she said:

"Now mother will hear what her Anthony has to say."

Endeavoring to be as collected as possible, he narrated minutely all that had occurred, leaving out, of course, the impression he had made on those around him, of which he was entirely unaware, but which his mother surmised from what had transpired.

When Tony had completed his story up to the return to the lady's home, he concluded by saying:

"And, mother, she wants you and me to see her this evening."

While his mother was still in a maze of bewilderment at the announcement, Tony rose, stood before her, made a Little Lord Fauntleroy bow, and said:

"The car will be here at seven-thirty, madam!"

He posed and spoke so lordly, that she could not refrain from smiling.

"Didn't you say, mother, that the sun is always behind a cloud?"

Her only answer was:

"God is good, son."

X

TONY'S mother surmised why Mrs. Morley wanted to see her. Doubtless it was some plan she had in mind for Anthony's musical education. It did not require a woman's instinct to discover that the good lady was deeply interested in Anthony.

By now Tony's mother was accustomed to refined people and others being interested in him. Whenever she went out with him he was the object of the gaze of passers-by in the street, and especially of people in the trolleys or subway. There was that about him which drew attention to him even in repose. But when animated he was a veritable magnet. Ordinarily a handsome boy, he was perfectly fascinating when interested in a person or thing.

Mrs. Bosco was revolving this and other things in her mind as the luxurious car hurried Tony and herself to the home of the newly-found friend.

A Japanese servant in uniform opened the door of the Morley apartment and directed the visitors to the drawing room.

Just before their arrival, Mrs. Morley had been in telephone conversation with her pastor, an Episcopalian divine. She was a devout parishioner of his and keenly interested in the affairs of his church. Recently he had established a boy-choir and was making special efforts to make it one of the leading boy-choirs of the city. A choir-master from one of the Anglican churches of London was in charge of the organization. Mrs. Morley informed her pastor of what she termed "her find." — "He has the most angelic voice, and is the dearest boy I've ever known. And he's a perfect little gentleman. He will fit in with our boys admirably!"

The pastor was delighted with the information.

Tony and his mother had been seated but a brief moment when Mrs. Morley came in aglow with animation. As she approached with her hand extended in welcome, they arose to receive her.

Mrs. Morley's keen glance rested mainly on Tony's mother. A quick appraisal of her as a woman of quality was the result.

Mrs. Bosco waited for her hostess to introduce the subject in hand. But as the lady

seemed rather embarrassed how to begin, Mrs. Bosco said:

"My son tells me that you are very kind to him, and good enough to be interested in him."

"Indeed I am, Mrs. Bosco; and I am even more interested in him now that I know his mother."

Mrs. Bosco acknowledged the compliment with a gracious smile.

It was evident to Mrs. Morley that, although Tony's mother was not blessed with riches, she was rich in culture. Everything about her indicated the born aristocrat. It was clear now where Tony's fine manners came from, also the source of his sensitive and artistic nature.

This made it difficult for Mrs. Morley to proceed. A lady of refinement herself, she respected the sentiments of her guest, who doubtless would resent any proposal of a patronizing character. So she began by saying what a pleasure it was to have had Tony with her at the violin recital. She went on to narrate what a perfect little gentleman he showed himself to be all through the afternoon. Then she came to the point.

"Mr. Heifitz seldom notices anybody. But he distinctly noticed your son. In fact he did

him the honor of asking him to come to the stage room. He was charmed with your son as a boy, but entirely captivated by him as an artist. Not that your son is a virtuoso, but that he gives promise of being one. He called me aside, and, thinking he was my son, or rather grandson, said that the boy under proper tutoring would become a violinst of the first rank. Then he told me whom he considered the best teacher in the world, and said he would give me a note to him which would assure the boy's being accepted. Now what I wanted to see you about, Mrs. Bosco, is, if you wish to have Anthony avail himself of this wonderful opportunity? "

Mrs. Bosco was stunned for the time being by the significance and magnitude of the proposal. Evidently Mrs. Morley intended to finance Tony's lessons, for it was clear to her that his mother could not do it.

While she was still pondering the proposition, Mrs. Morley continued:

" Of course it will require a considerable expenditure of money, and what I wanted to see you about, was to ask you, if, as a favor, you will allow me, as a patroness of artists, to see your son through his musical education "

For reply tears filled the eyes of Tony's mother. In her heart she had known all along that her boy was a genius at the violin. One of her standing regrets was that she could not properly foster his gift. She felt now as she did when Mr. White made his proposal. There was renewed in her the struggle between family pride and her son's welfare. With true motherly love she sacrificed her personal sentiments to her boy's future.

While she was deliberating, and all during the conversation, Tony had not interrupted by a single word or gesture. Knowing how very much he must have been concerned in the matter, Mrs. Morley saw in this another indication of the excellent breeding of the boy and of the fine quality of his mother.

At this point she was interrupted by the telephone ring. She arose to answer it. Again she observed the quality of her visitors, for, as she arose, they too arose. Again, as she returned to continue the subject they arose on her approach. Little things these, but, in persons coming from a broken-down tenement district, very significant. Nothing escaped Mrs. Morley. Particularly she observed the natural-

ness of these people. They seemed to be quite at home in elegant surroundings.

Naturally Mrs. Morley concluded that here was a history, a family tragedy of some sort. These people did not belong by right to a lowly environment.

While she was making these observations, Mrs. Bosco had come to her decision.

"You are indeed very, very kind to be so much interested in my boy, and for his sake I am happy to accept your proposal."

Mrs. Morley seemed to be as much pleased that her proposal was accepted as Mrs. Bosco was in accepting it.

Tony was momentarily in a celestial sphere. An ambition that he had never dared entertain was opened to him. The silent wish of his heart was to be fulfilled. He breathed a prayer of gratitude to God.

Mrs. Morley continued:

"Your boy has a marvellous voice, Mrs. Bosco. In fact I liked his singing as well as his playing. I even suggested to Mr. Heifitz that your son's voice should be cultivated, but he said that a boy's voice ordinarily vanished at sixteen, and that few boy-singers ever amounted to much as vocalists later. But it was

different with special talent for the violin. One could count on that to the end."

"That's very true," Mrs. Bosco remarked.

"Now what I should like to do for your boy is to see him through with regard both to his violin and academic education."

Mrs. Bosco was all attention and gratitude.

The lady went on:

"Your boy is too nice a lad to be thrown in with the common sort. I'm sure you'd like to see him with refined boys like himself."

Mrs. Bosco nodded acquiescence.

"Our church," Mrs. Morley continued, "has a boy-choir and a well-appointed choir house, where the boys receive the best possible schooling under cultured tutors. Besides they have an English choir-master to train their voices. It is a very, very exclusive establishment and has for its patrons some of the wealthiest and most prominent people of the city. It will be ideal for your artistic son."

"Does attendance at this school imply any particular religious obligation on the part of the pupils?" solicitously asked Mrs. Bosco.

Mrs. Morley was quite surprised at this interrogation.

Seeing her astonishment, Mrs. Bosco continued:

"What I mean is, will Anthony be required to assist at your church service?"

"Of course. That's the object of the school. The boys sing at the Sunday morning and evening services."

"But we are Catholics."

"Yes, I know that; but they won't object to a nice Catholic boy like Anthony."

"I think you don't quite understand. It's not a question of their objecting, but of our participating in Protestant worship."

"Why, there's no harm in that, I hope. We all worship the same God; we in our way, you in yours."

"That's just it; our way is not yours."

"I don't see that it makes any great difference."

"Well, Mrs. Morley, I'd rather not discuss the matter further. If, in order to benefit by your benevolence, Anthony must assist at your church's service, I must regretfully decline your generous offer."

For a moment Mrs. Morley was mystified. She thought what queer people these Catholics are. Any mother should be proud to have her

boy belong to this exquisite and fashionable choir-school.

Tony had not injected a word into the conversation. He was dying to express his sentiments of gratitude when Mrs. Morley had volunteered to undertake the expense of his musical education, but restrained himself, knowing that it would be impolite to interrupt the conversation of his elders. Again, when he realized that his castle-in-the-air was tottering and finally toppling to the ground, he wanted to let his mother know that if that was the price he had to pay for being loyal to his religion, he was glad to pay it, but his good-breeding restrained him in this instance also.

Mrs. Morley, thinking that if Tony were heard in the matter, his earnest desire for a career would persuade his mother to accept the proposal, said to him:

"And you, Anthony; how do you regard the matter?"

"Like mother, I'm deeply grateful to you, kind lady; but if that's the price I must pay for your interest in me, I'm afraid it's out of the question."

Although it cost Tony very much pain to say these words, which were death to his hopes,

he nevertheless spoke them firmly and even exultingly.

There was a moment of embarrassment, which Mrs. Bosco ended by rising and saying:

"If there's nothing further, I think we shall thank you for your very kind intentions — which we extremely regret not being able to accept — and take our leave."

So saying, both she and Tony bowed their thanks and withdrew.

When they reached the street they found the car waiting for them and the chauffeur opening the door for their entrance. Mrs. Bosco graciously thanked the man and added:

"It's a beautiful evening, and we prefer to walk."

The chauffeur then went to his mistress to see if she had further orders for him. He saw by her look that she was surprised he was not taking her guests home. Observing her astonishment, he said:

"They told me, madam, that it was a beautiful evening, and that they preferred to walk home."

The chauffeur was in Mrs. Morley's service for some eleven years. Frequently she had told him that he was invaluable to her, and

had treated him accordingly. Living in an exclusive apartment she knew him only by his faithful and courteous service, as he lived with his family in another part of the city. She was once heard to remark that the world would be a better place if there were more people like William in it. She was accustomed to speak her mind in his presence whenever she was suddenly embarrassed. And now she uttered what was uppermost in her mind:

"Queer people, these Catholics, William!"

What was her astonishment to hear from him:

"I am a Catholic, Mrs. Morley."

XI

ON the way home neither mother nor son spoke a word. The return was like that of the followers of the Master from Calvary. They had thought that at last the sun was out for good, only to have it obscured again by this dark cloud. Their hearts were heavy as they walked along in the darkness of the early evening. It was the end of another rainbow, and no pot of gold after all.

As soon as they got to their apartment, each saw the need of comforting the other. It first took the form of an ardent embrace, during which Tony's mother repeatedly kissed him on the head and forehead, he meanwhile nestling close to her. After this manifestation of mutual understanding and sympathy a load seemed to be taken from off their hearts.

Mrs. Bosco sank into her chair heaving a sigh. It was not for herself but her boy that she suffered. She realized what pain his blasted hopes must have brought to his little heart.

What was her astonishment, then, on hearing his first words! Sitting on a chair directly in front of her, his face aglow with living Faith, he exclaimed:

"Mother, dear, I really never felt so proud in all my life as now. I feel that I've done something to prove my loyalty to Our Lord."

"Indeed you have, son."

"This is the hardest thing I've ever had to bear, mother; but it's the things that cost that count. This has cost me a lot so I feel proud that I have had something worth while to offer to God."

Tony's mother, whose main concern was not for herself but for her boy, received something akin to an electric shock on hearing these words. In her own mind she had been considering what she could say to him to mitigate the pain he felt at this great disappointment. He almost took the words from her mouth. Only it seemed to her that he had put the matter better than she herself could.

In response to his noble words of resignation and faith, she drew him to her breast and held him there lovingly until she could master her emotion. Then she said:

"God bless you, Anthony! I had rather hear

such sentiments from you than to see you the first artist of the world."

They sat silent for a time, communing with God; even as another mother, long ago — the blessed Monica — communed with her son — Augustine. It was the mother who broke the silence.

"Son, what a blessed thing is our Holy Faith! It never allows us to lose heart. Even when it is darkest, we know that God is near, and that He is *our Father,* who has a wise and loving purpose in every cross that He sends us."

"I wonder, mother, if Father Boone called while we were out? He said he was to be in the neighborhood this evening, and that he would drop in to find out how the affair in the office ended."

"It's too much to expect, Anthony; he's a very busy man."

"Yes, mother, but he has a habit, it seems, of showing up when we're in trouble, and we're surely deep in it now."

As his mother made no reply, he went over to the table where his violin rested and taking it out began the strains of that song of loving trust — *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep.*

"Rocked in the cradle of the deep,
I lay me down in peace to sleep;
Secure I rest upon the wave,
For Thou, O Lord, hast power to save.
I know Thou wilt not slight my call,
For Thou dost mark the sparrow's fall!
And calm and peaceful is my sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep."

He had hardly finished playing the first verse when there was heard a rapping on the door. Tony dropped his violin and hastened to see who was there. As he opened the door, to his delight, it was Father Boone.

The priest saluted him, with:

"What's this heavy music I heard just now?"

Not waiting for an answer, he greeted Tony's mother:

"Good evening, Mrs. Bosco; you look very serious."

"And that's the way I feel, Father."

"No bad news, I hope," — looking, as he said this, now at Tony, now at his mother.

"I don't know as you'd call it bad news," she said, "but it's not exactly cheerful."

Addressing Tony, the priest said:

"Is it that matter that you consulted me about?"

"No, Father; that turned out all right. I had intended running up to tell you about it, but something else has occurred which makes that nothing at all!"

As the priest was all sympathy and attention, Tony's mother said:

"Suppose you tell it to Father, Anthony. It will help us if we have some one share our disappointment."

Tony then began his story from his accompanying Mrs. Morley to the violin recital, and continued uninterruptedly to the final scene in her apartment.

"By Jove, that was a severe jolt, young man!" ejaculated the priest as Tony paused from his narration. Continuing, he said:

"There's no use trying to brace you up by minimizing the disappointment. It was about the hardest blow one could receive. It seems you were raised to a pinnacle of expectations only to be cast farther down."

He paused for a moment, and, as no one broke the silence, went on:

"These are the things which make trial of Faith. If everything went favorably, if things

turned out as we think they should, there would be little or no merit in trusting God. But faith in the captain of the ship, when the storm rages and the waves threaten, is faith indeed. God wants us to trust Him no matter how dark the clouds and rough the water."

To which Tony rejoined:

"And that's what we're trying to do, Father."

"So I realize, now that I recall your playing *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*."

"But it's awfully hard, just the same, Father."

"It's because it's hard at times that Our Lord chose the Cross for his portion. He knew that His followers would have their crosses, so He went before us carrying a heavier one than He asks any of His followers to carry."

Again there was silence. The priest continued:

"We all have our cross sooner or later. If we take it in the spirit of Faith, it makes us more like Christ, and brings us peace. If we resent the cross it becomes heavier and often leads to despair. When Christ said: 'My yoke is sweet and My burden light,' He meant if borne for love of Him and in the spirit of Faith."

"I was saying that to mother before you came in, only not in the same way. I said it was an honor to be able to bear something to show our love of God."

"That's even better than I put it, Anthony. We hold it an honor to do a service to a king, but to do something that costs us dearly for the King of kings, that's an honor, indeed. Moreover, God will not be outdone in generosity. But He has His own time and way."

"Precisely," added Mrs. Bosco, "and that's what gives peace — knowing that our trials eventually make for our true welfare."

"Yes," added the priest, "for our *true* welfare. The oldest and wisest of us are but little children in God's sight. Children often regard the rulings of parents as hardships. But in reality they are intended for their good. I remember that as a boy I loved to play, and that sometimes I resented the orders of my parents which obliged me to drop games and take to study. But now I thank God that my parents consulted my permanent welfare, rather than my passing enjoyment."

"Did you ever dislike study, Father?" asked Tony.

"Well, as a boy I was not in love with it, nor with anything that interfered with play."

"I'm glad to hear that, for there's hope for me!"

"Why, Anthony!" exclaimed his mother; "you never shirk your studies."

To which Anthony rejoined:

"No, mother; but I'd like to at times."

Father Boone interjected:

"I have often thought that if a boy had his own way, and if his parents were indulgent enough to let him have it to the neglect of study, he would curse his parents later on in life, when he realized what it was to be without education. It is because God sees the future as well as the present that He deals with His children as He does — sometimes schooling them in adversity."

"I delight to hear you explain things, Father," said Tony. "You have a way with you!"

"It's God's way, son; and God's way, in the long run, always turns out the best way. God does not ask us to understand Him but to trust Him."

"But why can't we trust Him, Father, without having to be almost crushed? Some

people have it awfully hard. We've had it hard; haven't we, mother? "

Before Tony's mother could reply, the priest rejoined:

" Faith is a virtue. Like other virtues it must be tested. We do not know whether a man is brave or not, until he faces danger. Soldiers on parade all look valiant; but it is on the battlefield that the valiant is known from the coward. If God did not submit His followers to trials, all would be faithful and loyal. Everyone would be a saint, if temptation did not prove him. If God explained His ways and plans to us, we should see so much wisdom in them that there would be no merit in trusting Him. But He wants us to trust Him because He is *our Father,* and because He gave us our mothers with their tender loving hearts."

At this, Tony threw his arms about his mother and amidst kisses and embraces, muttered:

" Indeed, God must be good and loving since He gave me you, Mumsy."

When Mrs. Bosco had extricated herself from the affectionate entanglements of her son, she said to Father Boone:

"I think you've made a convert of at least one person in this room, Father."

"I don't know about that, Mrs. Bosco," replied the priest, as he nodded significantly at Tony, "I think that a boy who doesn't love his mother hasn't much chance of conversion, no matter who's the preacher."

For reply Tony started in to renew his display of affection, but this time his mother was on guard and warded him off. Addressing the priest after this repulse, Tony said:

"You'll have to go to confession, Father; you told a fib!"

"All right, Tony, but I hope I won't get too severe a penance!"

"By the way, Father," said Mrs. Bosco, "you said, a little while ago, that if we saw things as God sees them we should so much admire the wisdom of His dealings with us that there would be little or no merit in trusting Him. Just what did you mean by that?"

"I'll explain by an example. If a traveler is going along an unknown road, he can know what's going on and what the condition of the road is, only so far as he can see. What the turns and dangers ahead may be, he is ignorant of. But an aviator in an aeroplane, by aid of a

powerful field-glass, can see the road and its happenings at a glance from end to end. In some such way, God sees from beginning to end mightily. Nothing is hidden from Him. He is *Alpha* and *Omega* — the Beginning and the End of all things; with Him there is no past nor future — all is present. This being so, He in His wisdom sometimes permits those who are dear to Him to meet with hardships on the way, more securely to lead them to a blessed destination."

"Then the meaning of Faith, Father, is that we trust in God and His promises, no matter what the outlook?"

"Precisely. If we do our part, we have God's word for it that our trust in Him is well placed."

Saying this, the priest prepared to take his leave, saying:

"Well, I must be off now. I'm glad I dropped in."

"To which Mrs. Bosco replied:

"You don't know what a comfort you've been to us, Father. I'm sure that Anthony and myself keenly appreciate your deep interest in us."

"Good evening," the priest said, as he advanced to the door, bowing to both of them.

Then to Tony:

"At the Holy Sacrifice of the mass tomorrow I'm going to give you a special intention."

To their expressions of thanks he bowed himself out.

Father Boone had hardly left the room, when Mrs. Bosco sighed:

"God sent him to us at the right time, Anthony dear."

"Just when we needed him most, mother; and wasn't it good of him to promise to remember us at the mass tomorrow!"

"It was, indeed, very good of him, Anthony. If God sends us a burden, He also gives us the strength for it."

"Your words, mother, remind me of Moore's sacred poem, so exquisitely set to music by Haydn. If you don't mind taking out your harp and playing an accompaniment, I think that this hymn will help us to rise to the spirit of trust that Father Boone's noble words inculcated."

As this hymn of Moore's was a favorite of Tony's father, Mrs. Bosco was more than pleased to act on her boy's suggestion. While she was tuning her instrument, Tony took out his violin, and before beginning the hymn read it through to refresh his memory. His mother

needed not this preliminary as she was perfectly familiar with its consoling words. Presently their voices took up the sacred melody, and together they sang to the music of harp and violin, *Oh, Thou Who Dry'st the Mourner's Tear.*

"Oh, Thou Who dry'st the mourner's tear.
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee?
The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone.
But Thou wilt heal that broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

"When joy no longer soothes or cheers,
And even the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears
Is dimmed and vanished too —
Oh! who would bear life's stormy doom,
Did not Thy Wing of Love
Come, brightly wafting through the gloom
Our Peace-branch from above?

Then sorrow, touched by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray —
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day!"

As they finished, Tony said:

"We'd never know of the firmament, mother, nor of all the glories of the starry night, were it not for the going down of the sun. Perhaps the blasting of our hopes today may reveal God's loving concern for us in a way we little surmise."

"God bless you, Anthony!"

They talked over the events of the day for a while, and then turned to their prayers before retiring for the night.

Next morning Tony was up at daybreak and hastened over to the church to serve the early mass, as usual. At the mass he received Holy Communion and prayed earnestly for himself and his mother.

After mass he returned to a meagre breakfast and then settled down to his school work. His home work was considerable as the Sisters of the parochial school believed in making their pupils work.

After school he reported at the telegraph

office and ran errands as he was directed. This day no call came to the office from Mrs. Morley. Tony hoped that this did not mean that he would lose his job. As day after day passed, and he continued at work, although never assigned to report at the Morley address, he concluded that the good woman had applied elsewhere for an escort.

Things went on in routine fashion for some five or six weeks — Tony practising on the violin every spare moment — when one morning after he had served mass, the priest said to him:

"You know Father Boone?"

Delighted to hear the name, Tony replied:

"Yes, Father; very well; he's a friend of ours."

"Well, he phoned last evening, asking me to say to you that he would like to see you this evening on your way home from work."

"Thank you, Father; I'll surely see him."

Tony told his mother of the message, adding:

"What can it mean, mother?"

"I'm sure I don't know, son; but I'm glad he's sending for you, even if it's only for a chat."

"He's too busy for that, mother. I'll bet he

has something up his sleeve. You know he especially remembered us at mass."

Tony was distracted all day at school, and after school in the office. He could not get it out of his mind that Father Boone had a purpose in sending for him. What it was he could not surmise, but he felt that it meant some good turn of events. He could hardly wait for the hour of closing. As soon as he was free, out he bounded and rather ran than walked to the "L" station, and thence by rail to the street near the rectory of St. Leonard's.

He had not long to wait. He was hardly seated when a cheery voice greeted him:

"How's the little fiddler?"

"All right, Father; and I hope you're well, too."

"I understand you've given up fiddling," — jokingly.

"You're a tease, Father."

"Well, how would you like to take up violin playing instead of fiddling?"

Tony looked questions. The priest let him remain in a quandary for a moment, then went on:

"I think I've something good for you, my boy. A few days ago a friend of mine called my

attention to a competition which is to take place about three weeks from now, and the winner is to receive an annuity for seven years, which will pay his living expenses and tuition under the best violin teachers of this country and Europe.

Tony's eyes sparkled.

"Of course the cleverest lads in the city will compete, but I think you don't need to fear the best of them. A boy whose playing appealed to Heifitz has reason to be confident."

The priest then informed Tony of the particulars. A wealthy gentleman, a music patron, whose boy at the age of fourteen met with a fatal accident, founded, as a memorial to his son, a burse of six thousand dollars annually, to be given to a poor boy who showed special talent for the violin. The burse was to be awarded by competition, three of the leading violinsts of the city to act as judges. No boy whose parents could afford to pay for his musical education was eligible. The burse had been started seven years previously, and the winner of that time was now about to complete the course, which included two years abroad under the best Continental teachers.

Already some forty boys had entered their

names. The list was to close in four days, and application must be made in person.

"Do you suppose, Father, I have a chance?"

"If my opinion's worth anything you have a good chance. I'm not much in the music line, but a man doesn't have to be an orator to recognize a good speaker. Anthony, if I were a betting man, I'd put my last dollar on you!"

"Oh, thank you, Father; thank you! I won't disappoint you. I'll practise every spare minute from now till the day."

"That's the way to talk, son; you've half won the prize already by making up your mind that you're going to win it."

Father Boone gave him the address where application should be made, and other directions which would facilitate matters.

Smiling his gratitude, Tony took leave of the priest, and all but flew home.

A short while after, hasty steps were heard on the Bosco stairs, and, on looking up from her needlework, Tony's mother beheld in the doorway the most excited bit of humanity she had ever laid eyes on. Without saying a word he threw his arms about her and hugged her frantically. She let him give vent to his excited feelings without interruption. When he had let off

excessive enthusiasm by this safety valve he began, almost too breathless for speech, to narrate the wonderful news.

Wise mother that she was, fearing that if his hopes were too high his disappointment, if not successful, would be intensified, she took his narrative quietly, at least externally. Inwardly she felt somehow that this opportunity was the hand of God, that her boy would not lose it.

"You don't seem to be very much interested, mother!"

"I'm interested, son; but 'there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'"

"Father Boone says I'll win!"

"I hope the good Father is right, but a prize like this will have many competitors whose friends are sure they'll win."

"Well, mother, if I don't win, it won't be because I'll not do my very best. I'll practise; I'll pray; and I'll do without something I like very much!"

"Above all, Anthony, don't forget to say frequently, 'Thy will be done.'"

Tony was too much excited to answer his mother. He ran over to his violin, kissed it, and proceeded then and there to go in training for the great contest.

He had narrowly observed the ease and grace of Heifitz, and now set himself to copying the pose of the great virtuoso. Standing before the mirror, he endeavored to hold the violin as he had seen the master do. Leaving off the playing of melodies or agreeable selections, he confined himself to the most difficult scales in his repertoire.

Tony kept at this sort of work until it was time for supper. Having finished his meal, he began to make ready to do the dishes, but his mother waved him aside.

He went directly to his violin and again took up the serious work of the scales. Over and over he would play a particularly intricate movement, holding to one very hard scale for the greater part of an hour.

While he was playing, his mother was praying. She realized that doubtless there were many other hopefuls working equally as hard in various abodes of the great city.

As it was approaching ten o'clock, and Tony showed no signs of letting up, his mother reminded him it was bedtime.

"So soon, mother!"

"It's rather late, son; later than usual."

On looking at the clock, and seeing the hand near ten, he ejaculated:

"How the time flies! I thought it wasn't nine yet."

Next morning he was up early, as usual, and off to serve mass. He would prefer, if he consulted his likes only, to spend the time at his violin, but he put aside inclination for religious devotion.

After mass, Tony briefly told the priest of the coming competition, and asked him to give him an intention at mass.

"I'll remember you in the Holy Sacrifice every day until the great event."

"Oh, I'm so grateful to you, Father."

Tony shot home, and, breakfast not being quite ready, took up his violin and went to work. After breakfast he did his home work for school, and having some twenty minutes' margin, again took up the violin.

Thus it was day after day. He lived the violin. Everything else was only a concession — a necessary interruption.

He went to the application board on the day assigned, as directed by Father Boone. While he was waiting for his turn, he saw boy after boy rejected. Not one of those in line ahead of him qualified, for one reason or another.

This preliminary examination consisted of

playing a few lines at sight, and submitting to interrogation about previous instruction and home conditions.

Tony noticed that two boys who easily qualified in playing were rejected after the questioning ordeal. He observed that these boys were well dressed. He began to regret that his mother had arrayed him in his best for this test.

When there was but one boy between him and his turn, Tony began to get nervous. This boy seemed to Tony to perform excellently, and also to give evidence of being deserving of the aid which the burse afforded. When he saw the lad rejected, his heart sank, but he uttered a fervent *Hail Mary,* and braced himself for the worst.

"Your name, son?" This from one of three musicianly-looking men at the table before him.

"Anthony Bosco, sir."

"Italian?"

"My father was Italian, my mother is English."

"What does your father do?"

Tony's eyes filled, and the man adroitly turned to another question.

"Where do you live?"

Tony told him.

"Who is in the family besides you?"

"Mother."

"Just your mother and you?"

Tony nodded assent.

"What does your mother do?"

"Needlework."

"Is hers the only money coming in?"

"I work after school and Saturdays."

"Well, young man, let's see what you can do. Take out your violin and try this passage."

Tony breathed a fervent prayer; nerved himself to do his best; and took his place before the music stand.

He drew the bow over the strings to be assured of perfect tune, and then, forgetting everything and everybody, concentrated on the task before him. He became so absorbed in what he had in hand that he lost all nervousness after the first few notes. He was arrayed in his Sunday best, well groomed in head and hands, and stood there every inch an artist.

Before he had half finished the passage, the men nodded assuringly at one another, and hardly had he ended when he heard from them almost simultaneously:

"Well done, young man."

Tony was given a slip of paper and told to report in the Chamber Music Room of Carnegie Hall two weeks from date.

He could not get home fast enough. Throwing open the door, he burst in, greeting his mother:

"I'm accepted, mother, I'm accepted!"

He then started excitedly and incoherently to tell her of it. But he was so anxious to say it all at once, that he said nothing as far as her understanding of the matter was concerned. His mother let him run on until he ran himself out. She could make neither head nor tail of what he had been saying.

After Tony had taken breathing space and had become somewhat composed, she said:

"It's wonderful, son! Wonderful! Tell me all about it again; tell me every little thing!"

Not perceiving the delicate tact she displayed in getting him to repeat his story, Tony proceeded again, quietly and deliberately, to tell all that had occurred. When he had finished, and as he stood before her radiant with his own joy and the joy that was hers, he whispered:

"Mumsy, God has given me the best mother in the world!"

XII

AS the day for the competition drew near, Tony was all expectancy. His mother thought it desirable to have him take a leave of absence from the office and also to remain from school the week preceding the competition.

Realizing how much depended on his success, she left nothing undone that could contribute to it. Even though she did without herself, she saw to it that Tony had good nourishing food and plenty of it. For mental and bodily recreation she took him every day to Central Park and spent a couple of hours walking along its beautiful paths and enjoying the extensive lawns and the charming lakes. This meant ten cents carfare each way, but she reasoned that it was money well spent. Of an artistic nature herself, she understood the subtle connection and influence of the beauties of nature on the artistic soul.

Mrs. Bosco saw to it that Tony retired early in order to get a long sleep. She did her best by persuasion to have him sleep late in the morn-

ings, but she perceived that if she kept him from his devotional practice of serving the early mass she would only make him restless. So she allowed him to rise at his usual early hour.

Besides the measures employed by his mother to make him ready for the great day, Tony was doing something on his own account. He not only practised faithfully on the violin, but moreover made a visit to the church every day, and said his beads and made the stations of the cross in order to draw down God's blessing on his efforts.

In addition to this he promised to abstain from candy for six months. As Tony had a very sweet tooth, this was no slight sacrifice. But he knew that sacrifice is the language of love, and accordingly made the offering cheerfully.

He told his mother of these devotional acts, and she heartily approved, knowing that nothing wins the favor of God so much as prayer accompanied by sacrifice.

Two days before the great event, Father Boone dropped in on his protégé to see how matters were progressing. He found Tony at his violin and his mother at her sewing. They were agreeably surprised to see him, both lay-

ing aside their work on his entrance, and greeting him most affably.

His first remark, after the formal greetings, was:

"Well, Anthony, my boy; how are we making out?"

"I'm glad you said *we*, Father, for now I know we're in partnership; you do the praying and I the playing!"

The priest smiled as he rejoined:

"You said more than you realized, young man. You know what the poet says, 'more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of'; and it's often that I've seen it verified. But prayer does not mean that we throw the whole burden on the Lord."

"That's why I'm working like blazes!"

As Tony said this he gave a quick glance at his mother to see if she objected to *blazes* as slang. He observed a slight raising of her eyebrows, only. Tony continued:

"It's the old saying, 'Trust in the Lord, but keep your powder dry.'"

"Or," added the priest, "as St. Ignatius puts it: 'If your wagon gets stuck in the mud, don't go to the side of the road and pray, but while praying hard put your shoulder to the

wheel — (here he looked slyly at Tony's mother) — and push like *blazes!*' "

Tony roared. He was justified, exonerated, honorably acquitted!

Father Boone had observed the silent passage-at-arms, between mother and son, over the questionable phrase, and, realizing the tension under which both were laboring, threw in this bit of drollery to relieve the situation.

He went on to say:

" Anthony, you've done everything possible to win success. You've worked and prayed and denied yourself. Perhaps some of your competitors have done the same. Also some lad may need this prize as much as you. Success is desirable, but it's not everything. Many a man has risen to great things by reverses. Go into this competition with confidence, but also with the realization that if you do your best you have been successful even if you lose, for the real prize is in the fact that you've done your duty."

" I'm so glad you've said that to Anthony, Father. I don't want him to feel too bad if he loses; and after all, as you say, there are many eager hands reaching out for this prize."

As the priest rose to leave, he said to Tony:

"Don't forget the partnership; I'm going to pray like 'blazes' for you."

"And I'll work — (here Tony hesitated a moment, glanced at his mother, and, seeing a smile on her face, fairly shouted out) — "and I'll work like blazes!"

After the priest had taken leave, Tony went back to his violin and his mother to her sewing.

With her own hands Mrs. Bosco was making Tony a velvet suit of coat and knickers, and also a white linen waist exquisitely embroidered. She was an expert at such work, and the ruffles which adorned the waist front were a work of art. She knew that the true artist does his best in appropriate environment, and that dress was not the least factor of environment. Also, she realized that the artist performs for the eye as well as the ear, and that everything would have a bearing on the issue.

Tony himself loved nice things. Also he had the faculty of arranging the most common dress so as to make it presentable. Not that he was finical, but that he had abhorrence of carelessness. It was noticed that no matter how properly Tony was dressed he was never regarded by his companions as fastidious or

snobbish. There was something so manly about him that his neatness suggested culture rather than foppery.

While his mother was putting the finishing stitches in the waist, Tony was just ending his last scale. He was really tired. With the exception of Father Boone's interruption, he had been practising nearly three hours. Putting aside his violin he went over to his mother.

"Let's try it on," he said, pointing to the velvet suit.

After a few more stitches the waist was completed and his mother said:

"Take it now and let me see what 'Little Mozart' looks like."

Going to his dressing room — which consisted of a portière in one corner of the room, behind which was what he called "my hotel" — he donned the suit and trimmings.

On emerging from his "hotel," Tony was the personification of decorous elegance. The suit fitted him as if it were painted on him. The waist set off the coat to perfection. He resembled one of those boys depicted on the canvas of the Dutch masters. His mother was proud of him.

"If I can't win in this, Mumsy, I deserve to lose."

"Well, son, it's just a little help, perhaps. Who can tell how much little things affect a big issue? We are doing all that depends on us. The rest rests with God."

His answer was a hug, the hug of a boy who admired, loved, all but worshipped his mother. In return she pressed her lips lovingly to his forehead.

After lunch they put on their things, and went for their Central Park outing. They had enjoyed the walks and the expanse of lawn and the games of croquet they had seen played, and were on their way to the Fifth Avenue entrance at Fifty-ninth street when they perceived an old blind fiddler wheezing a tune on his instrument. The poor man was escorted by a girl of eight or nine years, who held a tin cup in her hand for offerings from the passers-by. It seems that the man was an intruder; no beggars — for such he really was — being allowed in the Park. The girl caught sight of a policeman in the offing and warned the fiddler. He stopped playing, and in his eagerness to turn about slipped and fell on his hand. It was plain to see that he had hurt himself not a little. Arriving

outside the Park he attempted to continue fiddling but found himself unable to hold the bow in his injured hand.

Tony and his mother had seen the tragedy, for such it was to the poor unfortunate.

"May I give him a nickel, mother?"

"By all means, Anthony."

Tony dropped the coin in the can and was about to go on his way, when a sudden impulse came to him to do something for the old man.

"Mother, may I play a tune to help him out?"

The mother hesitated for a moment, and then, because the poor are always the best friends of the poor, assented.

Tony went to the old man and told him what he proposed to do. Without saying a word he handed the fiddle to the boy.

The fiddle was dirty, the strings filthy, and the bow sadly in need of rosin. Of course the man had used the fiddle simply as a begging device, and the worse it was as a fiddle the better it was for creating sympathy. Fortunately, Tony had a box of rosin in his pocket. He rosined the bow, tuned the instrument, and made ready to play.

At the unusual spectacle the passers-by

stopped out of curiosity. In a minute or two, as he was about to begin playing, there was a circle of listeners around him. Naturally he struck the pose he was accustomed to in practice, and that pose was as artistic as a Greek statue.

Before beginning he made an offering to God of this act of charity he was doing for one of Christ's needy brethren. Then forgetting surroundings and everything but his art, he proceeded to play.

The fiddle, although dirty and neglected, was nevertheless in right hands a good sounder. Not knowing why, but under the influence of the moment Tony struck off the melody of *Ben Bolt*,

"Oh! don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt,
Sweet Alice, whose hair was so brown,
Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile,
And trembled with fear at your frown?
In the old churchyard in the valley, Ben Bolt,
In a corner obscure and alone,
They have fitted a slab of the granite so gray,
And sweet Alice lies under the stone.

"Under the hickory tree, Ben Bolt,
Which stood at the foot of the hill,
Together we've lain in the noonday shade,
And listened to Appleton's mill.
The mill-wheel has fallen to pieces, Ben Bolt,
The rafters have tumbled in,
And a quiet that crawls round the walls as you gaze,
Has followed the olden din.

"And don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
With the master so kind and so true,
And the shaded nook by the running brook,
Where the fairest wild flowers grew?
Grass grows on the master's grave, Ben Bolt,
The spring of the brook is dry,
And of all the boys who were schoolmates then,
There are only you and I."

Tony played it through with so much soul that it was almost like a voice from the past. The crowd which stopped out of curiosity, stayed to listen to the end. Tony put so much feeling into his playing that the eyes of all were riveted on him.

When, however, after playing the melody through, he began to sing the words tenderly musicianly and with that quality in his voice which gripped the heart, the throng stood as if entranced. There was not a dry eye in the circle of hearers as his voice died out with the plaintive — "And of all the boys who were schoolmates then, there are only you and I."

Tony stopped. For a second he was not aware that he was the center of observation. He had only done what he considered ordinary. Quietly taking off his cap, he passed around the circle of listeners holding it out for an offering for the blind man. Coins, dimes, quarters, half-dollars, bills, fell into the cap. Tony handed the collection to the girl who emptied it into the cap of the man.

While giving back the fiddle to the old man, Tony said:

"Say a little prayer for me, good sir."

The man could tell, by the weight in his cap, that he was much richer for the boy's act of charity. Tears were on his cheeks as he muttered:

"God bless you, boy, and may God and His Blessed Mother ever be with you!"

Tony had difficulty getting out of the admiring circle, but he regained the side of his mother and they were soon lost in the Fifth Avenue crowd. As they were going along, the mother, turning to her boy, said:

"I was never so proud of you as I am today, Anthony."

"And, mother, I don't think I was ever so happy as I am today."

It was about five o'clock when they reached home, and, as there was an hour before they would sit down to the evening meal, Tony employed it to practise on his violin.

While he was thus engaged, a knocking was heard at the door, and in came Tony's old violin teacher. He had heard that his former pupil had qualified for the prize test and had come to congratulate him. After the formalities of congratulation were over, he said:

"Let's hear you play once a leettle."

He was very small and bent, an Austrian who had come to America when he was about fifty. A schoolmaster in the old country, he took up book-binding here, and besides taught the violin, after a fashion, to a few pupils. He was elated when he heard of Tony's preliminary success.

"Even shouldn't you win the prize," he said to his former pupil, "you already have distinction."

Tony graciously thanked him, attributing his success to his master's painstaking efforts with him.

As Tony proceeded to play some of the scales he had been practising, the old man ejaculated:

"Oi! Oi! What a boy! I never could play that myself. Who iss your new teacher?"

"You are the only teacher I've ever had."

"You are a mi-rá-cle, mi-rá-cle! I never could haf play that. You are teasing the old man. Who iss your teacher?"

Here Tony's mother came to the rescue.

"You are the only teacher he's ever had, sir; but since he left you, he has practised day and night, and besides he seems to be a born violinist."

"Mi-rá-cle, mi-rá-cle; never haf I heard such tone from a child; and the accuracy! Not one leettle meestake, not one!"

Then as Tony ran off scale after scale of intricate notes flawlessly, and with perfect poise and ease, the old man rose and folded his pupil in his arms.

"Tony, you are one mi-rá-cle player. You

haf the soul. You make the fiolin almost to speak."

To Tony this was the greatest possible encouragement. Although his old teacher had told him he could do no more for him, Tony knew nevertheless that he was an excellent judge of music and musicians. The encomium of his former tutor gave him the assurance which he so much needed for the approaching test.

After wishing his pupil the best of success in the competition, the old man took his leave, muttering as he went out:

" Mi-rá-cle player! Mi-rá-cle player! "

Mrs. Bosco was thrilled by the encomium passed on Tony's playing by his former teacher. She realized that in very deed God had endowed her boy with extraordinary artistic gifts. Her heart went out in gratitude to the giver of all gifts. Almost unawares she broke out into that other hymn of Moore's — *Thou Art, O God!*

She had hardly sung the first few lines when Tony joined his voice to hers. As she was absorbed in the sentiments of the sacred song, she gave no thought to accompaniment. But Tony reached for her harp, and, placing it in her hands where she sat, her fingers automatically touched the strings, and together they sang —

" Thou art, O God, the Life and Light
Of all this wondrous world we see;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from Thee.
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine!

" When day, with farewell beam, delays
Among the opening clouds of even,
And we can almost think we gaze
Through golden vistas into Heaven —
Those hues, that make the sun's decline
So soft, so radiant, Lord! are Thine!

" When night, with wings of starry gloom
O'ershadows all the earth and skies —
Like some dark, beauteous bird, whose plume
Is sparkling with unnumbered eyes —
That sacred gloom, those fires divine,
So grand, so countless, Lord! are Thine!

" When youthful spring around us breathes,
Thy Spirit warms her fragrant sigh;
And every flower the summer wreathes
Is born beneath that kindling eye.
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine! "

XIII

ON the morning of the day of the competition, Tony arose earlier than usual. He slipped out of the house quietly and hastened to the church, which was always open a half-hour before the first mass at five-thirty. He made the stations of the cross, offering up the indulgence for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. After that he knelt before the shrine of the Blessed Mother and said his beads, entreating her to help him do his best in the competition.

It was now time for mass. He went to the sacristy to put on cassock and surplice, and to assist the priest to vest for the Holy Sacrifice. While he was arranging his surplice a lad entered hurriedly, and, approaching Tony, appealingly entreated:

"Will you let me serve this mass; my mother is very ill and I want to offer this up for her recovery?"

Tony had his heart set on serving this particular mass. Also it was his to serve by right, as he had been assigned to it. On this day of

all others he desired to have that special share in the Holy Sacrifice which pertains to the server, as one who actively assists the celebrant.

But it did not take Tony long to decide that an act of charity, done for the love of God, is a service to God Himself, so he said pleasantly, although it spoiled all his plans:

"Willingly; here, take my things," and he took off his surplice and cassock and handed them to the grateful boy.

Tony then went out into the church and took his place in the front pew. At Communion time he approached the altar rail and received Our Lord. Among his other intimate ejaculations, as he made his thanksgiving, was this:

"Lord, I left Thee for Thyself."

In saying this it was in consequence of a sermon which he once heard, in which the priest had said that when we leave off a pious practice or an act of devotion to do an act of charity, we are not leaving the Lord but going closer to Him, since He said: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren that you do unto Me."

There was an interval of an hour this morning between this and the next mass, or Tony would have stayed to serve. As the competition was to begin at ten o'clock, he had to run home

and prepare for it. Thanks to the twenty-five dollars which Mr. Ryan had given Tony, Mrs. Bosco was able to fit out her boy becomingly for the competition. When the business of dressing was completed, Tony was as prim a lad as Little Lord Fauntleroy himself. Everything was in such good taste that the most cynical could not find anything to criticise as affected, nor the most exacting as careless.

When Tony was all ready, as there was a half-hour before the time for leaving, he devoted it to playing a few light exercises to limber up his fingers and facilitate his bowing.

About nine o'clock, mother and son descended the stairs of their tenement, and, walking a couple of blocks, took the Second Avenue elevated to Fifty-ninth street. Thence they walked cross-town to Seventh Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street to Carnegie Hall.

There was a number of boys waiting at the door, violin under arm; some accompanied by father or mother, or both, or by an elder sister or brother. The competition was restricted to boys under fifteen. Forty had qualified in the preliminaries, and these were the boys whom Tony saw as he and his mother neared the entrance to the Chamber Music Hall.

As Tony looked at the crowd of eager, earnest lads, he said:

"What a pity, mother, that thirty-nine of us must be disappointed."

The mother said nothing in reply, but in her heart rejoiced, that, even in a matter which so much concerned himself, he was thoughtful of others.

Presently the doors were opened and the boys and those with them were admitted on presenting their certificates. No one was allowed in but the competitors and those accompanying them. Mrs. Bosco held back as the eager contestants rushed to the entrance, and she and Tony were the last to enter.

Soon they found themselves seated in a fairly large room, at the end of which was a platform, and on it some music paraphernalia.

Promptly at ten o'clock three musicianly-looking men took their places at a table in front of the platform. These were the judges.

The competitors were known by numbers only, each having received a number after qualifying at the preliminaries. It seems that the session at which Tony was selected was the final preliminary, and he was the last of all the entrants to qualify. His number was forty.

As each number was called a boy walked to the platform, violin in hand, and performed until a little bell rang. No one played more than a half minute. As each boy finished, the judges conferred a second and made a mark of some kind on a paper before them. This first appearance was only the prelude to the real test.

When all the boys had appeared and shown their wares, one of the judges arose, and, turning to the audience, said:

"All except the following are excused; the rest will please leave."

Tony's heart was in his mouth as the judge proceeded to read the survivors of the first round.

In a bass voice the man announced the following numbers as those who were to remain: seven, thirteen, eighteen, twenty-two, twenty-six, thirty-one, thirty- two, thirty-four, thirty-nine, forty. It was a sad procession that slowly made its way out. It was a nervous group that watched them depart.

No time was lost. The numbers were called again, and this time each boy played a couple of minutes. As before, the judges made their annotations, and when all had performed, the same man again arose to announce:

"The following numbers will remain: thirteen, twenty-two, thirty-two, thirty-nine, forty. The others please leave."

The unfortunate lads dejectedly packed away their instruments, and slowly made their way to the door.

One of the boys, an ill-favored lad, muttered, as he went out, that number thirty-two was over fifteen and had no right to be there. Tony overheard the remark but paid no attention to it. But the mother of number thirty-nine whispered to her son:

"Dit you hear vhat dot poy sait?"

Thirty-nine had evidently heard it, but at the time said nothing further.

There were now but five left. This time each boy played about five minutes. The judges were much more attentive than before. Occasionally as a boy was performing they glanced at one another significantly, or made a notation on the chart each one held in his hand.

When the five had finished, the same man turned to the now small group, and said:

"Those here may remain if they wish. The test has narrowed down to three. . . ."

Here he paused a moment, consulted with his associates and again turned to the handful

before him. The room was as still as death. Tony's heart was beating like a drum. His mother held his trembling hand in hers. The man announced:

"Numbers thirty-two, thirty-nine and forty will please be ready."

Tony gasped. His mother patted him on the shoulder very gently.

Thirty-two was the first to ascend the platform. As he did so, thirty-nine turned to his mother and said:

"He has no right here. You heard what that boy said!"

To which she replied:

"Vell, let's see first how he does."

Thirty-two was now put to a very severe test of some ten minutes. He played remarkably well. Fingering, bowing, poise, were astonishingly good for a boy. As Tony noticed the approving looks of the judges he felt sure that this boy would be the winner.

Thirty-nine also arrived at the same conclusion. He turned to Tony, and whispered:

"That fellow don't belong here; he's over fifteen."

Tony made no reply.

"Ain't you going to kick?"

Again Tony said nothing.

Tony's mother overheard the lad's remark. She whispered:

"You are not here, Anthony, to judge but to compete. It is not manly to question a rival's standing on mere hearsay."

"I'd rather lose than challenge him on that evidence," was Tony's reply, and the mother gave his hand a pressure of approval.

After thirty-two had finished, thirty-nine ascended the platform. He certainly was an artist. There was little if anything to choose between him and thirty-two. The knowing looks of the judges showed that they had a job on their hands.

When he finished, Tony walked to the platform, evidently nervous. He was not quite master of himself as he began, but once he entered into the spirit of the music all thought of himself fled, and he played to perfection. The judges never took their eyes off him.

When he finished there was a brief consultation and the same announcer said:

"We shall hear thirty-two and forty again; thirty-nine is excused."

Thirty-nine was out of it, regardless of who the ultimate winner might be. It now

rested between thirty-two and forty. Even if the prize should go to thirty-two, the next in order would be forty, not thirty-nine; so it really did not concern thirty-nine at all whether thirty-two was over fifteen. Tony alone was now entitled to object to his competitor, if he so wished. He did not so wish.

Just as thirty-two was about to begin, thirty-nine exclaimed:

"He has no right there, he's over fifteen!"

This challenge caused consternation among judges and people alike. In the silence that followed, the voice of the mother of thirty-nine cried out:

"That poy iss ofer fifteen. He cheat my poy!"

There was turmoil all around, but especially around the parents of number thirty-two. The judges summoned thirty-two to them and asked his age.

"I am fourteen," — indignantly.

They then summoned his father and mother. Fortunately, the father had the birth-certificate, duly signed and attested. This settled the matter. It seems that the boy who accused thirty-two of being over the age, was simply acting under the impulse of disappointment and

envy, as thirty-two and he lived on the same street.

The judges now excused all except the two contestants. When they had left, the same man who had been spokesman previously, said:

"I don't think it would be fair to thirty-two to go on with the test now as this disturbance must have upset him. It's past lunch time. We shall adjourn until two o'clock." — He added: "You two may leave your things here if you wish."

Tony thanked the man, but preferred to hold on to his violin. So did thirty-two. All slowly departed — number thirty-two and his parents by themselves; Tony and his mother together; the judges, three abreast, proceeding leisurely and last.

When Tony and his mother got to the street, they were at a loss what to say or do. Neither of them felt like lunch, nor did they know much about the neighborhood. They found themselves walking aimlessly down Seventh Avenue until they came to Fiftieth Street.

So far neither had spoken. Their emotions were so confused that it was hard to express them. They were, first of all, grateful that the competition still left them a chance for the

prize. They were also filled with apprehension over the final outcome.

In her own heart Mrs. Bosco, who was no mean judge, considered her Anthony the superior of the two. But she distrusted her judgment where her own boy was concerned. Tony realized that he had a strong competitor, but would not concede victory to him.

Tony now was the first to speak since leaving the Hall.

"Thirty-two is certainly a fine player, mother; but if I survived all those tests there can't be much difference between us."

This struck his mother as being a sensible deduction and it gave her heart.

Looking to the east over Fiftieth Street, they caught sight of the twin spires of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Tony exclaimed:

"There's the Cathedral, mother; let's go there. I have no desire for lunch, and that's a good place to rest — and pray."

His mother had the same idea before Tony broached it; so without further ado, they walked over to St. Patrick's. Mr. Ungerer, the organist, was at the time rehearsing some music for the next Sunday. The solemn music of the organ was balm to the soul of Tony. It attuned

his spirit to higher things than those of earth. I brought him into cheerful communion with th angelic choirs and suffused his soul with heav enly content.

Tony did not know that this inspiring music was the very thing best adapted to put him in the right frame of mind for the ordeal ahead. Neither did his mother. But a psychologist would have prescribed nothing better for one in his state.

They enjoyed the music for about three-quarters of an hour, and then, after an earnest prayer, made their way out by the Fifth Avenue door. They had difficulty keeping together up the crowded avenue to Fifty-seventh Street, but reached there with twenty minutes to spare in which to cross over to Carnegie.

"We must lose no time," his mother said, "for I want you to be seated and well rested before the test begins."

They walked faster over Fifty-seventh Street, as there was less congestion there, and arrived at the Hall at a quarter of two. They were the first to be seated. While anxiously awaiting the hour which was to decide so much for them, Tony's mother took out from her handbag a much-worn little book, in which she had writ-

ten with her own hand some few poems which on occasion appealed to her and gave her inspiration and help. Together Tony and she mused over the following lines of Samuel Lover — *The Pearl is under the Wave.*

" Where sunbeams play
O'er the Indian Bay,
Arose a blithesome song
From the fisher-boy,
In his youthful joy,
As he row'd his bark along;
As he row'd his bark
To the dangers dark
His daily task must bring,
He sped the way
To his cheerful lay,
For thus did the fisher-boy sing —
'Oh! the pearl is under the wave!'

" As, o'er the Bay,
The blithesome lay
Saluted still my ear,
I thought it might
Be a lesson bright
Some drooping heart to cheer.
How oft we find,

By Heaven designed,
That good should spring from woe,
And sorrow's tide
Awhile but hide
Some joy that lies below —
As the pearl lies under the wave."

After its perusal, Tony said:

"I hope, mother, that the pearl is not so far under the wave as to be beyond reach."

"Let's quietly say the rosary," she replied, "that it may not be out of reach."

Tony took out his beads and began silently to tell them. His mother did likewise.

XIV

AS the Clock in the room was striking two, the judges entered and took their seats. The same man who conducted the proceeedings previously, faced around and said:

"Number thirty-two, please."

At this word the boy advanced to the platform, and made ready to play the selections assigned him. He played well — amazingly well, for one of his years — and Tony was prompt to acknowledge it. He whispered to his mother:

"He's wonderful, isn't he, mother?"

To which she nodded assent.

For nearly half an hour the boy sustained, most satisfactorily, every demand made upon him.

A great deal depended on the decision, both for the boy and the judges. For the boy it meant six thousand dollars a year for seven years, including two years abroad, with more added in the course of time if his progress justified it. The idea was to give a youth of un-

doubted violin talent the opportunity of developing his gift to the utmost. The burse was made generous, because it was realized that a boy in his teens required guardianship, and the prize was accordingly ample for the support of the winner and an elder of his choosing, besides paying for tuition under the very best master. So it meant a great deal for the boy, whoever he was, who should receive the award of the judges.

For the judges it meant that their reputation was at stake in the musical world. The decision was looked forward to by the violin teachers of the city and the professionals generally. It was considered an honor to be appointed a judge in the competition, as only musicians of recognized reputations were considered for the post.

Both for the boy's sake and for their own reputations, the judges were desirous of awarding the prize to the one who was entitled to it. Their real work began with the last ten only. Up to that they readily separated the chaff from the wheat. When the choice narrowed down to five, they found that their task called for very careful procedure.

What guided them principally in their decision was not so much the actual proficiency

of the performers as their promise of development. Years of experience had enabled them to discern that peculiar quality in a player which distinguishes the fiddler from the violinist, and a violinist from a virtuoso.

It was the embryo virtuoso that they sought to discover by the various tests which they had devised for the competition. The nature of these tests grew more exacting as the numbers narrowed down. This final test was long and severe.

Number thirty-two seemed to fulfill all the requirements. When the lad had finished the judges smiled on him, and gave every indication of being very favorably impressed. The boy took his seat alongside his delighted parents.

"Number forty, please."

At the sound of his number, Tony gave a start. His mother gently pressed his hand, which had rested in hers, and whispered:

"Courage, Anthony."

Contrary to his expectations, he was calm as he took his place on the platform, violin in hand. Somehow the agitation which he had apprehended did not develop.

During the few seconds that he stood waiting for directions, he seemed to live years. There

passed before him in a flash, but vividly, the morning in the Woolworth Tower when he made friends of Mr. White's party; the fight he had with the bully at the telegraph office; the scene when Banks tried to bribe him; Heifitz, statuesque and entrancing in the Waldorf-Astoria music room; and, finally, the poor blind fiddler in Central Park, whose grateful words he could now almost hear: "May God and His Blessed Mother always be with you."

Tony was awakened from his reverie by the voice of one of the judges directing him what selection to play. He was as calm and collected as if he were practising at home. His mother was amazed at his composure. She kept repeating: "Holy Mary, Mother of God; Holy Mary, Mother of God!" Just that, over and over again. Not making any petition, only calling on the Blessed Mother, leaving it to her to know what was in her heart.

Tony went through the first test of about seven minutes very satisfactorily. When called upon for the next, he looked at the music before him, and turning to the judges, said candidly:

"I don't think I can do that."

There was a rustle of pleasurable excitement

among the group behind Mrs. Bosco. Number thirty-two and his party were whispering animatedly. A voice was heard saying:

"Franz, you surely will. . ."

That was as much as Tony's mother could hear, but it was much more than she wanted to hear. She kept repeating: "Holy Mary, Mother of God! Holy Mary, Mother of God!"

The judges looked at one another. The spokesman said kindly:

"Don't you think you better try it?"

"It's way beyond me, sir."

His mother kept repeating: "Holy Mary, Mother of God; Holy Mary Mother of God!"

At the suggestion of one of the judges the spokesman asked to see the piece. Tony handed it to him. It was a stray sheet that had got mixed in with the test music and was part of a concerto, something which only a mature artist could attempt. The judges perceived the mistake, informed the audience of it, and passed the music to number thirty-two for his inspection. And still Tony's mother kept repeating: "Holy Mary, Mother of God! Holy Mary, Mother of God!"; but now as a prayer of relief and thanksgiving.

The judges seemed greatly impressed by the

fact that Tony at a glance recognized the nature of the composition and realized that it was altogether beyond him. Most performers, under the circumstances, would have made some effort or other at playing it. Tony's candor and perspicuity stood out unmistakably.

He was ordered to proceed, but before doing so handed the music to the judges for inspection. They smiled at his evident desire to avoid a recurrence of the embarrassment, and, after glancing at the music, told him to proceed.

The incident seemed to put heart into Tony, if indeed he needed it. At all events, thereafter he was master of the situation.

He was a picture to look at. In his Little Lord Fauntleroy suit, and in his perfect position, copied after Heifitz, and in the exquisite manner in which he drew the bow across the strings, and above all, in his countenance made seraphic by the soul of a real artist reflected in his every lineament, he seemed the personification of genius.

In the interval between the second and third tests, Tony's mother heard the same voice behind her saying:

"Franz, he iss perfection; he iss one grand artist."

The group behind was very still now.

The third and last test was about to begin. Tony, so far, had not once looked towards his mother. But he knew that her eyes were riveted on him, and that her prayers were with him. Just before he was to start the third period, he cast a glance in her direction, which she interpreted to mean that he was not perturbed.

The last selection given Tony was chosen in order to discover or display that rarest quality in an artist — the power to grip his audience by a certain something which is recognized but hard to define, and impossible to acquire unless it be part of one's nature. No great artist lacks this quality; no one without it may hope to rise above the crowd of good but not great performers.

As soon as Tony saw the selection before him his heart leapt. It was the very kind of music he revelled in.

On account of his poverty, Tony had not been able to master the technique of his instrument as he desired, for his master was barely qualified to give him the essentials. Everything else was his own doing, the result of painstaking and continuous practice.

But there was one thing which the best

master could not impart, and which Tony possessed in a high degree, and that was temperament, or the soul of an artist.

With marked restraint, and great suppressed emotion, he communicated his soul to his instrument. His violin and himself seemed to be one. He coaxed tender tones out of it like a mother drawing a smile from her babe. Again, he swept the strings powerfully as the spirit of the piece carried him into strong emotion. But always he was master. He did not overdo. He was not led into excess of sentiment no matter what the emotion that stirred his breast.

The conclusion of the selection called for a pianissimo effect. As Tony drew near the end, he gradually diminished the volume of tone, playing the last measures so delicately, yet withal, so distinctly, that the sound seemed to emanate from a distant instrument.

He finished. For a moment he stood as if in ecstasy. The judges, too, seemed to be in a reverie. He had not only soared aloft himself, but had also carried his listeners with him.

It was Tony who broke the spell:

"Is there anything else?"

The judges, instead of replying, shook their heads and motioned Tony down.

He went to the seat alongside his mother, who firmly grasped his hand, but had not a word to say. Nor did Tony venture a word. There was perfect stillness in the place as the judges went to a side room to deliberate. Number thirty-two and his party were as speechless as Tony and his mother.

As the minutes flew by, the contestants and their friends grew restive. The longer the delay, the greater were the hopes or fears of the competitors. It was evident that the decision might go to either party.

Tony heard number thirty-two whisper that his teacher was a friend of one of the judges, and he hoped that that would make a little difference in his favor. The father of number thirty-two, hearing this, said, with his finger on his lips:

"Tss; tss."

The boy took the warning and said no more. Ordinarily he would not have been heard by those in front of him, but the silence was so intense that the least sound carried.

Tony gave no indication that he heard the remark, but he was a bit upset by it, fearing that possibly it accounted for the long deliberation of the judges, and not knowing what

possible effect such a connection might portend While he was reflecting on these things, the door of the room opened and in walked the judges.

Tony was as cold as marble and as motionless. His face turned pale. His mother, although as deeply affected as himself, had more self-control and showed exteriorly little of the perturbation that was within.

The spokesman for the judges engaged in a little undertone conversation with his associates, they nodding approval to whatever it was that he proposed. Then turning to the two anxious groups, he said:

"I want to congratulate both of you young gentlemen on your superb exhibition. . ." Here he paused for a moment, as if hesitating to pronounce the decision which meant so much pleasure or pain to one or the other of the lads before him. Continuing, he said: "It has been a pleasure for us to hear each of you. Let me say that as far as skill goes, there is little to choose between you. It is our duty, however, to look beyond present performance and decide which of you gives promise of doing the greater honor to this noble endowment.

"We find that number thirty-two has talent of the highest order, and technique of exceptional excellence. We feel that he has a very splendid future and we wish him the highest success. It is the judgment of the judges, however, unanimously concurred in, that, considering not only present performance but future accomplishment, the prize should be, and is hereby awarded to number forty."

For a brief moment Tony and his mother were speechless. They were stunned by the stupendous import of the decision. The magnitude of the prize awed them. The realization of their hopes overpowered them, and their good fortune seemed too good to be true.

Tony was the first to come to. Throwing his arms about his mother, he fell on her neck, ejaculating:

"Mother! mother! Darling mother! Darling mother!"

Pressing her boy close to her heart — a heart filled with joy and gratitude — Tony's mother could only keep repeating over and over again:

"Holy Mary, Mother of God! Holy Mary, Mother of God!"

After a few minutes they made ready to

leave; and, as they were on the way out, Tony said:

"The sun is out at last, mother."

To which she replied:

"Let us hope, Anthony, that the sky will long remain clear."

Hand in hand, mother and son went out from Carnegie Hall into a brighter day.

THE END

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